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(Hansard)**

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Thursday
12 April 2018

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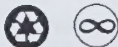
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 12 April 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 12 avril 2018

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PAY TRANSPARENCY ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018

SUR LA TRANSPARENCE SALARIALE

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 9, 2018, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 3, An Act respecting transparency of pay in employment / Projet de loi 3, Loi portant sur la transparence salariale.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated April 11, 2018, I'm now required to put the question.

Mr. Flynn has moved second reading of Bill 3, An Act respecting transparency of pay in employment.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members—this will not be a five-minute bell, because it will be deferred until after question period today.

Second reading vote deferred.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Orders of the day.

ACCESS TO CONSUMER CREDIT REPORTS AND ELEVATOR AVAILABILITY ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR L'ACCÈS AU RAPPORT DE SOLVABILITÉ DU CONSOMMATEUR ET LA DISPONIBILITÉ DES ASCENSEURS

Ms. MacCharles moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 8, An Act to amend the Consumer Reporting Act and the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000 / Projet de loi 8, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les renseignements concernant le consommateur et la Loi de 2000 sur les normes techniques et la sécurité.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ms. MacCharles.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in the House and speak to second reading of Bill 8,

Access to Consumer Credit Reports and Elevator Availability Act. The bill addresses two areas that, if passed, impact Ontarians on a daily basis.

Speaker, I'll be sharing my time with my ministry parliamentary assistant, Mr. Vic Dhillon from Brampton West. I'll be speaking to this piece of proposed legislation that, if passed, would provide fairness and stability for Ontarians when it comes to consumer credit reports and elevator accessibility.

Speaker, our government is committed to protecting Ontario consumers at home and in the marketplace. My remarks will focus on levelling the playing field to consumers accessing their credit reports, as well as this government's commitment to developing a plan that addresses elevator availability and establishing a repair-time protocol.

The proposed amendments to the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000, would establish a legislative and regulatory framework for elevator availability. We know that out-of-service elevators can be a source of frustration for residents, especially for the elderly, expectant mothers, those with young children and people with disabilities. That's why we have developed an action plan which would address areas such as elevator safety, availability, preventive maintenance and education awareness for owners and residents. The action plan also looks at the labour supply of elevator mechanics and provides for better elevator access for first responders trying to reach patients in multi-storey buildings.

As part of the action plan, we intend to develop an elevator repair timeline, to make Ontario the first jurisdiction worldwide to do so. In order to develop the standard, we need to collect more data and fully assess potential costs and impacts. We'll continue to work with all parties, levels of government and stakeholders through wide-reaching consultations as we move forward on our action plan. This, again, will make Ontario the first jurisdiction in the world to undertake such action on behalf of its residents.

Our government is focused on building a fair, safe and informed marketplace for Ontario consumers. If passed, this legislation would be added to an already impressive list of actions taken by this government to ensure that Ontario consumers are being protected.

One year ago, with the passage of Bill 59, the Putting Consumers First Act, our government moved forward with this vital consumer protection bill in the areas of home inspections, door-to-door sales and payday lenders.

More recently, with the passage of Bill 166, the Strengthening Protection for Ontario Consumers Act, our

government set forth to protect consumers when they travel, when they purchase tickets to a concert or sporting event, and when they purchase a home or have a new home constructed. It should be recognized that Her Majesty's loyal opposition did not feel that Ontarians deserved these latest protections and actually chose to vote against them.

As the Minister of Government and Consumer Services, the minister responsible for administering the Consumer Protection Act, I take very seriously the need to continue to enhance the rights of consumers while ensuring that businesses in Ontario are provided the opportunity to excel.

Minister Leal, our minister responsible for small business, also takes particular interest in ensuring that we strike this important balance. He and his office are dedicated to ensuring Ontario remains one of the best places in North America to set up and do business.

I would like to direct your attention, Speaker, to the timelines of this legislation as we mark World Consumer Rights Day. Every year, the consumer movement marks March 15 as World Consumer Rights Day as a means of raising global awareness about consumers' rights and their needs. Celebrating this day is a chance to determine and demand that the rights of all consumers are respected and protected. We need to protest on that day market abuses and social injustices which undermine these rights.

World Consumer Rights Day was inspired by President John F. Kennedy, who sent a special message to the US Congress on March 15, 1962, in which he formally addressed the issue of consumer rights. He was the first world leader to do so.

As minister, I want to ensure that consumers have the tools and resources available to them to make informed decisions about their purchases and to be aware of what courses of action they have available to them. This legislation, if passed, aligns perfectly with our previous record on consumer protections and the aspirational goals laid out by the late John F. Kennedy.

When it first arose in the news and my ministry was looking at any possible negative impacts to Ontarians regarding consumer reporting agencies' handling of personal data, we just found there wasn't a level playing field. Ontarians were not being given adequate access to their information or the ability to ensure that their information was being protected.

If passed by the Legislature, it would provide stronger consumer protection tools by giving consumers easier access to their own credit information. The bill is aimed at ensuring consumer reporting agencies give consumers greater electronic access, free of charge, twice a year, to their own credit history, including any credit history reports and scores that were shared with potential creditors over the past 12 months. The bill would also give consumers the option of putting in place a security freeze that would prevent agencies from disclosing their credit information to a third party. The changes would give consumers more access and control over their own information to help reduce the harm of identity theft.

0910

As we continue to move forward to a more digital environment, where many people living in Ontario would choose to review their credit report online, we need to ensure that consumer reporting agencies are providing them with access to their own credit history.

If this bill passes, the ministry will consult with consumer reporting agencies, as well as businesses that use the services of these agencies, to inform the development of regulations needed to implement the legislative changes without incurring unintended consequences.

The government's proposed amendments would create three major changes. First, when requested by a consumer, credit reporting agencies would have to provide consumers with their credit history and credit score electronically at least twice a year. They would not be allowed to charge a fee for this.

Second, agencies would have to provide, as part of a consumer report, any scores given to third parties within the past 12 months. This would help consumers to understand the information the agency has provided to the creditor.

Third, agencies would also have to give consumers the option to put in place, suspend or cancel a security freeze that would prevent agencies from disclosing information.

I should also note that my colleague sitting to my right this morning, the MPP for Beaches–East York, Arthur Potts, proposed many of these changes in his private member's bill last fall, and I thank him for that.

If passed, Ontario would have the strongest and most transparent rules in Canada over how consumer reporting agencies share your credit information. We understand that this bill would mean changes to the way consumer reporting agencies operate. These are not decisions we made lightly.

We know that the information shared by these agencies trickles down to all sectors of the economy. That's why we plan to consult with the public, including consumers, consumer reporting agencies, and businesses that use the services of the agencies, before forming the regulations that will allow us to bring the bill into force.

In particular, we know that many of the registered reporting agencies are small businesses. We want to make sure consumers are protected without creating undue burden to businesses, especially small enterprises. This would be a key factor in specifying the agencies that would be required to comply with the new rules.

These changes are being proposed to give consumers greater access to their credit information and the ability to limit when that information is shared with a third-party organization, like creditors.

Currently, the Consumer Reporting Act gives consumers free access to their consumer report but does not specify a timeline for the agency to provide it or electronic access. It does not require scores to be provided to consumers. It does not provide consumers the right to put a security freeze on their information.

The government believes that consumers need greater access to the information held by agencies, and more

control over how that information is shared. These changes, if passed by the Legislature, would give consumers greater electronic access, free of charge, to their own consumer report and consumer score, to be provided upon request up to twice per calendar year, including any consumer scores that were shared with third parties, such as potential creditors, over the past 12 months. The option of putting in place a security freeze that would prevent agencies from disclosing their credit information, subject to some exemptions, would be set out in regulations.

The changes, if passed, would also improve enforcement by giving the registrar greater authority to issue orders. If the bill is passed, regulations will be developed, in consultation with consumers, business and the credit reporting industry, before the changes could come into force.

The proposed changes offer significant benefits to consumers. Consumers would have greater access to their credit information and, as a result, be better able to identify their credit standing and any fraudulent activity on their accounts.

Consumers would also be able to place a security freeze on their information. This provides consumers with an additional tool if they believe their identity is compromised.

The ministry has received input on changes to the act through informal discussions with the larger agencies. If approved, the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services would consult with consumers, businesses and the consumer reporting industry on the regulatory details. The ministry would likely begin consultations with the industry on proposed regulations in the fall of 2018 if the bill is passed this spring.

Now to expand on the security freezes, these are placed at the request of the consumer. A security freeze prevents third parties, such as a potential creditor, from accessing a consumer's credit information unless the freeze is suspended or cancelled by the consumer. Security freezes are currently a consumer option across the United States. We believe that those living in Ontario should have this option available to them as well.

A freeze may help victims or potential victims of identity theft to protect their information. For example, it might be helpful for someone who lost a wallet where they kept sensitive information such as their social insurance number. This is why the ministry is proposing to require certain consumer reporting agencies to place the security freeze on an account at the request of a consumer.

A security freeze can help diminish the harm caused by identity theft. For example, if you believe your identity has been stolen, a freeze could help prevent someone from opening accounts like credit cards or a line of credit in your name.

The proposal includes regulation-making authority to determine fees for security freezes. The regulations could set out requirements to provide freezes for free following a breach.

A freeze would go further than alerts, which are already part of the act. A security alert is an optional service that consumers can choose that requires agencies to warn potential creditors to verify an applicant's identity. It can be a useful tool if you believe your identity has been compromised, but it does not necessarily prevent a potential creditor from getting information. With the security freeze, agencies would be prohibited from providing any credit information, subject to any exemptions that we would build into regulations.

This is another area where we want to get detailed feedback from stakeholders to be sure that we avoid any unintended consequences. We know there might be concerns in the industry about the time this could add to granting credit, so we will be looking to the industry for their thoughts on how we can find that balance between consumer protection and ensuring efficiency.

In the past, consumers have highlighted concerns they have with credit reporting agencies. Over the past three years, there were 2,090 complaints, incidents and inquiries made to the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services regarding the Consumer Reporting Act, 2009. Complaints about consumer reporting are among the top 10 most common complaints the ministry receives. The ministry did not receive complaints about the data breach covered in the news. According to the ministry's consumer protection data system, the ministry received 597 inquiries, incidents and complaints regarding the agencies between January 1, 2017, and February 28, 2018.

The most frequent issues about consumer reporting agencies are incorrect information, wrong individual, and a prohibited practice or missing requirement. This includes:

- consumers indicating that a bank, lender or person did not obtain permission to access their credit report;
- the credit grantor failed to notify a consumer that the consumer's information may be divulged to a third party, including other credit grantors and consumer reporting agencies;
- the user of a credit report failed to explain denial of benefits, such as the granting of credit;
- the consumer reporting agency failed to notify creditors that a consumer's report has been corrected after an error;
- a person or business knowingly supplied false or misleading information to a consumer reporting agency.

Given those examples, and many more, it was clear that something needed to be done to better protect consumers in Ontario.

0920

I want to talk a little bit about the effect on agencies and business. The proposed changes do not specify which agencies will have to provide free electronic access to reports and scores or which agencies will have to implement security freezes. This will be set out in regulation. The ministry would, if the bill is passed, consult publicly on regulations to meet these priorities. The government's intent is to capture only the largest agencies, as they deal

with the most consumer files and have the broadest reach.

The government wants to ensure that the amendments will balance the need to protect consumers without imposing an undue burden on businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises. If this legislation is passed, the ministry plans to consult on proposed regulatory amendments and to better understand the impact on consumer reporting agencies and businesses.

The come-into-effect date will depend in part on the outcome of the consultations with the stakeholders about the regulations. The ministry's intent is to have the regulations in effect in 2020.

As stated previously, I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, Mr. Dhillon. Mr. Dhillon will be elaborating more on different aspects of the bill before us. But I do want to touch just briefly on elevator availability before I turn it over to Mr. Dhillon.

I want to say that one of the true testaments to our government's dedication to democracy is the seriousness with which we consider private members' bills. This bill is comprised of government legislation drafted in response to two private members' bills. MPP Han Dong and MPP Arthur Potts brought forth bills regarding elevator availability and consumer reporting, respectively. They heard the concerns of their constituents and identified them as a larger problem that needed to be addressed. These two champions of consumer rights are joined by MPP Yvan Baker in continuously challenging this government to never wane in terms of consumer protection. This legislation, along with our recently enacted door-to-door protections, represents this government's and my ministry's answer to this challenge.

In terms of elevator availability, I'm granted a really unique perspective. As both the Minister of Government and Consumer Services and the minister responsible for accessibility in Ontario, I'm keenly aware of the importance of this issue.

Having access to an adequate number of working elevators is neither a convenience nor a luxury; it's a necessity and, in some instances, a lifeline. If you have mobility challenges at your residential building and it's without elevator service, where does that leave you? Too often we hear stories of those with disabilities and those with mobility challenges becoming prisoners in their own homes due to elevator breakdowns and slow repair times. Many are also caught outside of their residences when the elevators cease functioning and become burdened with unforeseen costs associated with locating and paying for alternative accommodations. For many with health issues, the lack of elevator availability can represent a significant health and safety risk.

With the growing number of multi-level residential buildings being built in this province, this is a problem that needs to be addressed. Our government has growing concerns with seniors and people with disabilities or other mobility issues being unable to get in and out of their condos, apartments, long-term-care or retirement homes because of unreliable elevators. But it isn't only

those with disabilities who are impacted. This impacts expectant mothers and those with young children as well.

Many of our high-rise residences have 40- and sometimes 50-plus floors. Even the most athletic among us would falter at the prospect of having to climb up and down those stairs. I encourage all Ontarians, of course, to engage in regular exercise, but 40 flights of stairs before going to work or coming home from work is not a reasonable thing to ask people to do. People should not have to worry about how to get to their homes from their lobby. This should be a quick and easy process.

In March 2017, MPP Dong introduced a private member's bill, Bill 109, Reliable Elevators Act. MPP Dong's bill received second reading and was referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills. It's for this reason that our government requested that the Technical Standards and Safety Authority—the TSSA—study the state of elevator availability in Ontario and come up with some solutions. The TSSA, in turn, commissioned an independent study, led by the Honourable John Douglas Cunningham, to develop a report identifying key challenges and proposing solutions.

Mr. Cunningham's report outlines 19 recommendations aimed at improving elevator availability. Madam Speaker, our government plans to take action on all 19 recommendations outlined in this report.

In January of this year, I was pleased to stand beside MPP Han Dong and announce Ontario's action plan on elevator availability. Many of the main points of MPP Dong's bill are addressed in this current bill before the House and in the province's elevator action plan. I want to thank MPP Dong for taking the initiative to introduce his private member's bill which informed this proposed legislation.

Speaker, I have been informed that unfortunately my parliamentary assistant is not here. I know the rain was challenging for the commute this morning for myself, so that may be what's holding him up. I'll proceed to read his remarks, if that's appropriate.

So, on behalf of MPP Vic Dhillon: Speaker, one of the key roles of government is to protect residents in areas where it's difficult to protect themselves.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Brampton West.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Sorry, it's Brampton West. I've been corrected: the MPP for Brampton West. Thank you.

This is why the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services and the Ontario consumer protection branch exist. It's there for Ontarian consumers. We want to ensure that we educate Ontario consumers on their rights and help them through situations where they may have been taken advantage of by a company or not given everything that they're entitled to.

One of the areas in which Ontario consumers find it difficult to protect themselves is, as we've discussed, credit reporting and how it impacts their credit rating. Typically, this is not something they think about on a regular basis. It's not until they're faced with circumstances where they need to go to a credit reporting agency that they come across situations where they

would have benefited from the type of legislation that we are introducing here. Examples of this are when you're trying to get a mortgage to purchase your first home, applying to rent an apartment, or being assessed for your dream job. At this point, your credit history may all of a sudden come into full focus.

The integrity of your credit rating also becomes front and centre when something goes wrong; for example, an error on your credit report. Credit report mistakes can cost consumers higher interest rates and even prevent some of them from getting loans. Or, even worse, identity theft can destroy your credit rating and may even take a heavy financial toll. This can have a negative effect on an individual and their family, and can at times take a very long time to try to resolve. I remember when that happened to my husband. It took a long time to deal with an identity theft issue. Madam Speaker, many people in Ontario lead busy and at times stressful lives. They do not need issues related to credit reporting agencies to add to this.

In 2009, the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre received identity fraud reports from 11,095 victims, totalling a loss of more than \$10 million. It's important for Ontarians to understand their credit rating and the information that consumer reporting agencies hold about them. This includes knowing how this sensitive personal information is shared and used. Madam Speaker, this is why our government introduced a bill that, if passed, would give Ontario the strongest and most transparent rules in Canada over how consumer reporting agencies share information. It would give consumers more access and control over their credit information, and it may help reduce the harm of identity theft. The people of Ontario deserve to be protected.

Consumer reporting agencies are private sector organizations. They collect personal information on consumers, including debt, credit and bill payment history, and other information used to assess a consumer's credit score.

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Agencies collect information about a consumer's debt and payment history from organizations like phone services, banks and many other organizations. In Canada, Equifax and TransUnion are the largest and most well known. Consumers who have received a loan or credit from a financial institution in Ontario are likely to have a file with a consumer reporting agency.

Many organizations, including banks, insurance companies and residential landlords access credit information about consumers held by consumer reporting agencies, to help them inform their decisions. This can include whether to grant an individual a mortgage or not, or to rent someone an apartment or not.

The information contained in a consumer reporting agency's credit files can have a huge impact on whether that consumer can get access to credit, or the interest rate they will be asked to pay on a loan. Under the Consumer Reporting Act, agencies must take steps to ensure that information contained within the consumer credit reports

is accurate and the contents are kept secure and only released for specific reasons.

As I mentioned, Equifax and TransUnion are the largest agencies in North America. They are also the two primary national consumer reporting agencies in Canada. But there are about 40 small consumer reporting agencies registered in Ontario which operate on a limited scope. Smaller agencies tend to specialize in providing information to landlords, employers or other niche areas.

It's possible that not all agencies will be subject to the proposed new provisions of this act. If the bill is passed, regulations would be developed to make consumer reporting agencies that collect a wide range of information in multiple sectors of the economy subject to the new rules.

In this respect, we believe that regulations should be developed in consultation with consumer reporting agencies as well as businesses that use the services of agencies. We believe this is the best way to get the job done without creating unintended consequences. We want to make sure that the regulations are fair and reasonable for everyone.

Since we know that many agencies are small businesses, their concerns will be top of mind. Our government is taking steps to make changes to strengthen consumer protection in this area.

The amendments we have proposed in the Consumer Reporting Act through this bill were developed in order to improve consumers' access to their own information, and to give them the ability to control when and how their personal information is disclosed by agencies.

If this bill is passed, the proposed amendments to the Consumer Reporting Act would do four main things. First, it would give consumers the right to get their consumer report electronically for free at least twice per year.

Second, consumers would also be given the right to get their consumer score for free at least twice per year.

Third, consumers would be able to place a security freeze on their credit file. This could be used in circumstances, for example, where the consumer may be concerned about identity theft. A freeze means that a consumer reporting agency could not release information about the consumer except where permitted by the consumer or where otherwise authorized under the act.

Fourth, the amendments would give the registrar enhanced enforcement powers and protections to help resolve disputes between consumers and consumer reporting agencies.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to outline to you why we have proposed these amendments.

With respect to consumer credit reports and credit scores, we know that some consumers may be unaware of the information contained in their credit report, or may be unaware of their credit score, until they seek credit or, unfortunately, something does go wrong.

Under the current rules, all agencies are required to give consumers access to their own information. Agencies are currently required to give consumers a written

copy of their credit report for free when they request it. However, these reports do not contain consumer credit scores and are typically provided by mail. In some circumstances, it's far more difficult to get a free copy of the report using the mail route, and therefore, many consumers look to get their credit report online.

Considering that the average consumer conducts many, many transactions online these days, it is reasonable for them to want to do the same when they're trying to obtain their credit report. However, this is not currently done free of charge. In this respect, many agencies currently charge consumers to obtain a copy of their consumer score or to get their report in electronic form. The proposed amendments will give consumers the right to get their consumer score and an electronic copy of their credit report for free, at least twice per year.

With these new proposed amendments, consumers would no longer have to pay a fee for convenience and—

Mr. Arthur Potts: Timely access.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: —timely access. Thank you.

If the Access to Consumer Credit Reports and Elevator Availability Act is passed, agencies would be required to provide electronic credit reports to consumers requesting it within two days and, again, at least twice a year.

Currently, consumers can ask for unlimited free copies of their credit files. However, consumer reporting agencies are only required to provide information in hard copy, as I mentioned. There's no maximum time requirement for them to do this; it can take several weeks for consumers to receive their credit reports. This is reasonable, as usually when someone is looking to access their credit report it's with the intention to do a straightforward transaction; however, that's not the case for other types of transactions. If, for example, a house is up for sale and someone wants to be approved for a mortgage, they do not necessarily have the time to wait a few weeks in order to get their credit report. This may result in them being unable to go through with, in this case, a purchase of a home. With how it is currently, however, they would be left with no choice but to pay and then go the online route.

In addition, if this bill is passed, agencies would have to provide credit reports that include previously generated scores, upon request. Currently, as I mentioned before, the only requirement is to provide the reports, not the scores. Twice a year, a consumer can ask for a newly generated score.

A credit rating or score is not part of a regular credit report. It's a mathematical formula that translates the data in a credit report into a three-digit number that some lenders use to make credit decisions. Credit scores typically range from 300 to 900. The higher the number, the more likely you are to get the loan or mortgage that you are applying for.

The changes we're proposing, if passed, would mean that consumers would have timely access to the details in their credit report. Consumers would also be entitled to

see any score that an agency has provided to any third party in the past 12 months as part of their credit report. This would result in increased transparency from the agency.

Madam Speaker, I believe that putting information in the hands of consumers is, indeed, a powerful tool. If consumers have ready access to the information in their credit reports, they are much more likely to spot errors or unusual activities that might indicate they have been a victim of identity theft. It's far easier to prevent these unfortunate situations than trying to remediate the situation after the fact.

If consumers have ready access to the information in their credit reports, it could also be a way for them to correct inaccuracies or to understand their credit rating and how it might affect them down the road. It would be a way in which they could make themselves self-aware of their financial situation so that they could choose to learn more about how to improve their credit rating and what their credit score would mean for them. This would be especially helpful to those who are considering purchasing a property or renting a place in the future. The added awareness could translate into dollars and cents on loan payments or in other types of situations that I mentioned earlier.

We do not believe the current situation is fair to consumers, who may be anxious to access their credit report and to understand their credit standing or ensure its accuracy. So we are committed to strengthening consumer protection in the credit reporting sector. This is part of what we do at the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services and Consumer Protection Ontario, and we want to continue doing that.

We also believe that the proposed amendments to the act and giving consumers the right to a security freeze would be an important new consumer protection tool. The act currently provides that a consumer may require an agency to include in a consumer's file an alert warning people to verify an applicant's identity. Many people use this, particularly if they think their identity has been compromised. While it puts additional onus on a potential creditor, it still allows an agency to release credit information.

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A security freeze would give the ability to intervene and prevent agencies from releasing information about their credit history. An agency would have to give consumers the option of a security freeze and prevent information from being provided to a third party unless the consumer lifts the freeze, and some exceptions would apply.

I understand my colleague from Beaches–East York is willing to speak to this bill and share the remainder of my time. I want to thank him for doing that and thank him for bringing this private member's bill forward. I know he's very expert on this bill. I'll be very pleased to pass the floor to him at this time. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the member from Beaches–East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: It does give me great pleasure to have an opportunity to stand and speak to Bill 8.

I want to start by thanking the minister and the minister's staff for the incredible support that I received in the course of putting together the bill when I first introduced it as a private member's bill last fall. It was something that came about as a result of conversations I'd had with many people, both in this House, with staffers around here, and people in my community on the aspect of the bill relating to credit reporting scores, and particularly in relation to when we saw a breach of data from a credit reporting agency.

The kinds of responses that we as Canadians were getting to respond to that breach—we realized that in the US, consumers were getting far more privileged rights in how to address that breach than we were receiving here in Canada. It just triggered an awareness that, in fact, we should be doing something about this. I did bring the bill forward and worked very closely with the minister's office and her staff to get a better sense of what could be done. One of the focuses we had, of course, was on protecting people against fraud, credit fraud and identity theft.

I remember the previous member from Toronto Centre, the honourable Glen Murray. He'd had a situation where his identity had been stolen. It was an interesting way they went about doing it in that his information was stolen and they got a credit in his name to go to the Brick. They bought a whole bunch of material. As you know, you have these "Don't Pay a Cent" events—maybe that's Leon's—where you don't pay for a year. For a year, somebody had stolen his identity, bought consumer goods, and they didn't have to pay for a year.

So it wasn't until after the year was up and suddenly the retailer was expecting to get paid for these goods and services that they defaulted on those payments. The fraudulent operators defaulted on those payments. As a result, they came back after him to pay for these things. He said, "Well, I don't have that television set. I don't have that electronic equipment. That's not me."

"Well, prove it's not you": All of a sudden, it seemed like the onus had been reversed on Mr. Murray to prove that it wasn't him who had acquired these things. The retailer was saying, "Maybe you bought these things, sold them off, and now you're just trying to escape paying for them."

Normally, when you find someone has breached your personal information as identity theft has occurred, you would have a chance to go back to that retailer and see the video evidence of whether, in fact, it was you who purchased those things. That's often used in order to rectify a credit card fraudulent situation. But in the circumstances where you don't pay for a year, where you're not expected to pay for a year, all that security data has disappeared. It became impossible to use that kind of information to prove it.

It became a very lengthy process in order to clear Mr. Murray of his personal debt. He spoke to me about this numerous times, on how we could address that. It may be

another amendment we might contemplate. Maybe this is another private member's bill at some point; I don't know. But maybe it can be addressed in regulation that any agency, any retailer that has no payment for a lengthy period of time, like a year, should be required in law or in regulations to hold on to security tapes until the payment part gets triggered; maybe hold on to it six months after the payments are expected to start. That would alleviate a lot of the credit fraud.

What we discovered as we were going through the opportunity here to protect people's identity was that if we could simply just freeze their credit information—by freezing it, nobody can access it. I know that at the moment, I've got all the credit I want and need at this particular moment in my life. My mortgage is in place; I have a line of credit for extraordinary expenditures I may need; I've got a few credit cards. I don't want any more credit. If I had the ability to go on and just freeze my score so that no other agency—no bank, no retailer, nobody—would have permission to use this, then that would go a long way to protecting people against identity theft or identity fraud.

In a way, who is really benefiting from this? We're actually, in many regards, protecting credit card companies and protecting retailers so they don't get caught up in this whole debate about "is it your purchase, or is it not your purchase?" This goes beyond just protecting consumers; it's actually protecting retailers and those high-interest-rate credit cards that may be excited and encouraged to give people credit that suddenly they have to charge, right, because the rate of default might be so high. That was what I thought was one of the most important pieces of this legislation that we had to get, and I'm so delighted that the whole freeze aspect has made it into this piece of government legislation, as it did before we prorogued the government earlier. This piece that allows people to freeze their credit scores is an extraordinarily important point.

I remember that Mr. Murray's chief of staff also had almost an identical situation. Maybe this is something that happens in downtown Toronto; I don't know. It was devastating because it took so long to clear up their credit history that opportunities where they may have needed credit went missing. They weren't able to, maybe, buy a property or rent a condo and this type of thing. So it's extraordinarily important that we have this freeze in place.

Now the other piece associated with getting free copies of your credit report: Part of this, I realize, was that I had a friend whose brother—we were trying to get him into a rental accommodation. The landlord insisted on having a credit report. Now, this particular person flies a bit under the radar. He doesn't own a car with a loan. He doesn't have credit cards. He has never really had to access credit as part of his way that he lives his life. Trying to facilitate this, I went online to see, and I was surprised. I was actually quite shocked to see that in order to get this information it would cost \$36 to get the kind of report that the landlord needed in a speedy way. I

went online and triggered the payment, because we were somewhat desperate. We needed it, and he needed to get this place in a hurry.

As it turned out, they had no credit reporting score on this person, my friend's brother. He doesn't exist in the system—no driver's licence, no car. He doesn't exist, and so the report spat back nothing. So I had just spent \$36 to get nothing. I thought, "That's not fair."

What I found really intriguing about this, Speaker, is that they hold your information. They track your credit card expenditures, your mortgage payments and your car payments. They track all this material without you really knowing about it. You might sign a waiver with a bank because you want to get that loan, but they are tracking everything. This is your information. They don't do this out of the goodness of their hearts, I can assure you, Speaker. They do this because they want to make money on it. They make money by providing the service to the people, the retailers, the banks and all these other agencies and financial institutions that want to do business with you, that want to give you that 28% Capital One credit card, which, by the way, I suggest you not take, because of your spending habits, particularly when you go down the US side and get to all those discount warehouses.

They want you to have this credit, and they are holding your information. You should have the right to see your information and not have to pay for it. Under the current act, you do have the right to get that information, but you have to trigger it with a written request. It takes weeks until you finally get it, and maybe the need for why you wanted it, as the minister very eloquently identified—you want to buy a house. In this housing market, you've got to trigger these things in a hurry. Getting an apartment, you've got to trigger in a hurry, because you could lose out if you don't have the information you need up front. Having the right to get it for free by writing and getting it in the mail? That's just old school; right, Speaker? Canada Post is an honourable institution that has worked so well since the days of the Pony Express, but we have moved past that. Now we're in an environment where we can do things online and we can do things electronically, and we should allow people to do that.

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In my private member's bill, I suggested that people get five copies. Maybe I was being a little overly exuberant. And who was going to do this five times a year? I got that. In the current bill, we have put it back to two, and I am sure that has to do with the input that we received from the credit score agencies that maybe two is going to be sufficient.

Speaker, that is how the bill came about that I wanted to move forward with. We also know that Mr. Dong, in his elevator act—and this is the second part of this bill. Again, I want to thank the ministry and I want to thank our side of this Legislature for the fact that they listen to us in the backbenches. They listen when we identify problems that we're hearing in our community. We

identify it, we bring it forward and we react to it. The member for Trinity-Spadina, he probably lives in the densest part of Canada with all the high-rises—particularly down in Liberty Village and all the other areas that he represents, Harbourfront high-rises, 40- or 50-storey buildings. This is probably one of the number one things he is hearing in his constituency, how difficult it is sometimes to get these elevators fixed in a hurry so that people don't have to walk up 20, 30 or 40 flights of stairs in order to access their residence.

So he brought that bill forward, and again, I am delighted that the minister's office and the ministry were so responsive, that we do need to put some additional protections. I have these same issues in my riding. I represent an area called Crescent Town: five big, tall buildings owned by Pinedale. Three of them are rentals; two of them are condominiums. Something like 12,000 people live in, I think, five acres. Some 12,000 people: a very, very high density. It becomes a very serious problem for people to get to work, to get to school and to go shopping and come back when elevators aren't running. Even if one of the three in a bank isn't working, it means lineups. What happens—and we've experienced this on days where there's mass movement in the building, for instance, to get to Eid prayer—is that everybody wants to leave at the same time so the elevators sometimes get overcrowded, and in getting overcrowded, the elevators stop working and it compounds the problem. It's very important that we put in place the kinds of protections to ensure that elevators are going to be repaired in a timely manner.

What else do we want to talk about here, my friend? The elevator act is important for all people who live in dense urban environments. I know that the Consumer Reporting Act is important to constituents that I have who need to access their credit reporting on a timely basis.

What else am I going to talk about at this point?

Interjection: The Leafs.

Mr. Arthur Potts: The Leafs. I do have a little bit of ways to go.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Turn the page.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Turn the page? Well, there's actually not much here that I could sort of—well, you know, this elevator act, what it does if it's passed, it amends the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000. They will start to collect elevator data. You know, Speaker, that if you don't measure it, you can't fix it, so it's very important that we collect the kind of data that's necessary.

We also have a problem in the industry and we're trying to address that through apprenticeship rules, which is a second approach at the same problem in that we don't have enough technical experts in elevators. It's an area of labour shortage. I'm very proud that in our budget, we have added a whole bunch of new revenues to encourage people to get into job categories where there's a demand in the marketplace and to open that up: skilled tradespeople who could be fixing elevators.

We are going to ensure that elevator performance is published so that prospective residents can make better informed decisions before they rent or buy. You need to know if you're in a building that consistently has elevators that are failing. It might be that they're old, they need to be retrofitted. This is part of what we need to do to ensure that properties are kept up to a proper standard. If there is data collected and I want to—if someone says, “You're going to pay a lot of money for this apartment on the 31st floor,” and you can ask and there will be a place to go and find out that, in fact, this building has a history of elevator issues, you might rethink that decision. You might rethink that decision on whether or not you are going to rent in that particular building.

I had a wonderful nephew—this is a bit of a sad story, but it's quite relevant to the whole credit score issue. My nephew Arthur Tevlin, who died quite young at, like, 22 of a heart attack—quite suddenly. He had just graduated from high school, he was at college and he was getting jobs and he was very active in the community. When he started to get that sense of independence, the first thing he did was he went out and got himself a credit card. It was a very high-interest credit card and he ran up a fair bit of debt. We were all concerned about it, but unfortunately, when he died—it was such a tragedy because he was such a young and incredibly vibrant person. We used to say that his heart was too big, Speaker. He died of a heart attack in his sleep; quite painlessly, we suspect.

But he left a debt of about \$18,000 in credit card bills because he had been encouraged to get this credit and do stuff with it. I recognize, again, that this is part of the industry where they want to give people, even when they may not be in a position, more credit than his job would have possibly allowed him to pay back in a reasonable time. Typically, credit card companies will just forgive debt in that kind of example, and that's part of the reason we have high interest rates attached to those. They just forgive the debt. And they did. But as a family, we didn't feel great about that, so we all got together at the Becel Ride for Heart. We all signed up and got sponsorships as a team in my nephew's honour. We went out and we raised about the \$18,000 that he owed so we could give it to the Heart and Stroke Foundation. It's something we've done in his memory a number of times since.

I guess we were saying earlier, about how we do need to collect the studies and the data associated with it.

I want to go to another area.

Interjection.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'm doing my best.

The overall goal of the action plan with elevators, of course, is to protect public safety. You need this elevator service in multi-storey residences in Ontario because it will help address the inconvenience and the potential harm that residents experience. Improvements in the availability of elevators will help people make informed decisions.

It will also help—and this is important, about the public safety. What happens when you have a fire on the 30th floor of a building and the paramedics, the fire

service arrive or there's an accident, and there's no way to get up there? When you have a big fire, of course, you're not supposed to go in the elevators but in order to respond quickly to get up there, you have to make sure—it's important that elevators in the province are going to be in use. It's almost part of the Fire Code. There should be a requirement that if one is down—you can never have all down at the same time, for instance, so education awareness for elevator owners.

Also, for people with accessibility issues: We have the act, the Ontario disability act, and we're two thirds of our way through trying to make sure that all public spaces in Ontario are accessible. Where they're not, we take the necessary steps to make them accessible so that people have full and appropriate access. Elevators, of course, are an incredibly important piece of getting all buildings accessible in order to ensure that people with mobility challenges can get to where they live or can go visit a friend or get to their appointments back and forth. That's an important component of why we need to do this and to improve elevators, and I know that's something that the member from Trinity-Spadina was certainly focused on.

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I also understand that a lot of the work we have to do still is going to be in regulation, particularly in the credit reporting area. We need to sit down with the big players and make sure that we craft regulations that will be workable.

I met with a group of people shortly after I introduced the private member's bill, and they asked the question of me, “How are you going to monitor this? How are you going to know that a credit agency is actually getting back in a timely way?”

They were offering up a solution where they would act as an intermediary between the consumers, the ministry and the reporting agencies so that they could, on real-time data, track whether people were fulfilling their obligations. When you, as a consumer, put in a request to get a copy of your report, for instance, it would trigger a timeline in a blockchain-secured environment so that once it's fulfilled, you would know that you got the report in a timely way, as is required in the act and the regulations.

I'm hoping that we can spend time with the large credit agency companies to ensure that they are working in a way that keeps this thing open and accountable and transparent for users across the province.

One of the things I had also put into my bill initially—and it can be addressed in the regulations—is the requirement that credit agencies correct improper data in a timely manner. We had a timeline of two weeks, during the course of regulatory development. If you go online and see your credit, and it has a whole listing of things that aren't yours, you need to correct that, and you need to be able to correct that quickly. I had put a two-week window in my private member's bill, and we'll see where that ends up.

Speaker, you probably don't know a lot of Arthur Potts, but in the course of my life, I've got to know

quite a few. My grandfather, in fact, was an Arthur Potts, a major general. My father's twin brother was an Arthur Potts. He was a lieutenant colonel in the Canadian Armed Forces, and he had a son named Arthur Potts. So just within our own family, there were four Arthur Pottses.

I recently met an interior designer who works for Holiday Inn—he helps decorate the Holiday Inns—and his name is Arthur Potts. It was interesting, because when I met him for the first time, and his male partner, I told him the story about how I was dating a young lady and she said to her friend, “I’m going to bring my boyfriend over. His name is Arthur Potts.” She looked at her a little askance and said, “Are you sure?” Because she knew the other Arthur Potts, who was the interior designer, and didn’t think that he would be dating her. So there’s an Arthur Potts.

Then I had another Arthur Potts. You’d wonder, if his information showed up on my credit reporting score—

Mr. Brad Duguid: Are these real people or are they just fictions?

Mr. Arthur Potts: These are true stories.

It’s funny: I’ve just got on to a line that I’d forgotten about. There is another Arthur Potts, who is an artist. He’s actually a really talented modern artist, a painter, who operates out of southwestern Ontario, I think, in the London area. I was at the Cumberland movie theatres, and I was admiring this very beautiful painting. I said, “Wow. That’s really good.” So I walked up to see the name and what it was called, and the price tag. It was \$24,000. It was a beautiful oil, with lots of dimensions in it. I’m standing there and I look at the name, and it’s Arthur Potts, the artist. So I’m thinking, “This is kind of interesting.” I step back. My wife had gone to the facilities, and she came back out, and I said, “Look at this. We should buy this.” She was admiring it, and she said yes.

Then a gentleman came over, and he was looking at it and admiring it. I gave him my business card, and he said, “Why are you giving me this?” I said, “Well, look at the name.” He said, “Oh, my gosh. Is that you?” I said, “No, but if you want to buy it, I’ll give it to you for half-price.”

So we know that there are many people with the same name, and it can affect their credit score if the wrong information gets attached to it. That’s why we need to have this bill and get it in place, so that we can protect consumers in Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jim McDonell: It gets awful worrisome when we hear how many Pottses there are around in the region, especially Arthur Pottses.

It’s always a privilege to get up and speak on behalf of the residents in Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

The name issue rings a bell. In Glengarry county at one time, about 60% of the population was McDonalds and McDonells. Identifying people was somewhat of a problem, so everybody had a nickname. If I go back to just when I was growing up, at a younger age when that

was not as much of the case, we would have four or five James A. McDonells within just a couple of concessions. We would all have the same address of RR 1 North Lancaster—or Dalhousie, at the time, probably; Dalhousie, Quebec. Then we would go by Jim Gill or Jim Alex John or Jim Alex. Typically, what they would do is they would go to your father and then your grandfather in the nickname, unless you had—there were many others. There was Alex the Fool. There were different nicknames that the family would carry on, and others that aren’t so funny. But it does speak to the issues with credit and mailing, especially with the tendency sometimes for a family to use all the same initial, which causes problems for different post offices.

I know that when we had a chance to speak to the credit group, they were somewhat concerned because they hadn’t been consulted on the bill yet. I know that they talk about consulting before the regulations, but I think that if you’re going to craft legislation and do the best you can, you have to consult with the stakeholders. So I was somewhat surprised when we heard that that hadn’t happened yet. I know the ministry said that they have plans to do it, but when you rush out legislation—it’s maybe not planned. I’m not sure why you would not be discussing the issue with either one—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I was listening to the minister as she was doing her lead on Bill 8. It is an important bill. There is so much identity theft that it’s important that we protect consumers. Right now, with the way we have social media and access to the Internet, I think it’s probably more prevalent that there are opportunities for identity theft and we’re not even aware of those opportunities.

Right now, as we’re hearing, Facebook has had information given to agencies that people are completely unaware of. So protections are certainly warranted and I’m glad to see there is that piece where a consumer can initiate that freezing of their information. That’s really important.

When I was in the insurance industry, through the years, it evolved that we offered identity theft coverage because we’d just seen that happening more and more, and people would be put at a financial disadvantage because of identity theft. That was also discussed earlier, that when your identity is taken, it affects you financially, and to go through that web of undoing all that misinformation is very difficult. If you had the identity theft insurance, that also protects you for some of the losses with respect to financials and then also recovering documents, because, as someone talked about, when you’re looking for documentation, there are fees included in those things as well. This bill is certainly welcome, that we are here having this discussion.

I like the piece about the elevator as well. That’s something that we have to address in today’s world. There are accessibility issues and it’s important that we maintain those services so people can have access to the

number one place, which is your home, in an apartment building.

I'm glad to hear more debate on this and look forward to it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. James J. Bradley: I'm particularly pleased when I see consumer legislation coming before the House, because it's that which we hear from our constituents, very often, that prompts private members' bills and ultimately government bills.

I look at a list of some of the consumer legislation that is associated with this. We have legislation that enhances protections for consumers using home inspectors when purchasing their homes. We have legislation to protect consumers from aggressive door-to-door contracting tactics for certain goods and services. All of us have had complaints about that and there has been legislation brought in that will go a long way to ending that.

We're moving forward with many of the recommendations from the Honourable Douglas Cunningham's review of the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act and Tarion Warranty Corp. to improve consumer protection for new home buyers and owners, and we're undertaking a review of the rules that real estate professionals are required to follow to strengthen professionalism and further protect consumers when conflict-of-interest scenarios arise in multiple-representation situations by allowing for heavier fines for code of ethics violations.

1010

Philosophically, I want to say that there is a difference in approach that is taken by people in politics. There are some on the right who believe that the less intervention we have in our society—this, for instance, in some cases would be bothersome to business. So they would say—it's one of the particular mantras out there—that somehow you should not be putting red tape in the way of business, and some businesses might well consider this to be red tape. But I think there's a pretty good consensus in our society that the protection of consumers should be paramount over the annoyance of some for the protection that that does provide.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It's always an honour to contribute to debate. I want to thank the Minister of Government and Consumer Services for her speech this morning, and also I must say, as we approach the end of the legislative session, I'm sure I'll miss for several months the good Thursday morning debates and discussions that we hear, especially from the member for Beaches—East York, who always has a personal anecdote to lend a bit of flesh to the situation and give a little more substance when we're talking in abstracts. I think the situation that he brought up was important, talking about something that the member for Glengarry—Prescott? Dundas?

Interjection.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: South Glengarry. There's a bunch of eastern Ontario included in there.

But I wanted to just say that I think it is important that we recognize the need for consumer protection and the need to do so in a responsible way. I know the member for St. Catharines spoke about particular philosophical differences that we might have in the approach to free enterprise and the free market. Although I would have to agree that indeed there needs to be a free market that understands and is able to respond to the needs of consumers and respond to the needs of society, particularly as it pertains to providing services, we do have to look at how we can protect especially those who are vulnerable in our society, when we think of seniors who are prey to door-to-door salesmen. I think that there have been some actions taken that are steps in the right direction. I think red tape is not necessarily regulation; I think it's fair to say that we all support some forms of common-sense regulation.

At the same time, I do want to just touch base that the concern that I have with this legislation is, as well, the lack of accountability of the TSSA. Stakeholders have expressed frustration with its practices for years, so we have to take that into consideration with this legislation as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services to wrap up.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: First, of course, I want to thank the member from Beaches—East York for sharing time with me and bringing that colour and those personal stories to life, so thank you for that. But he should also be credited for his work not just on this bill but other important consumer protection bills. There were more points—one comes to mind and I know he has another one coming up.

There are two other MPPs who are really strong advocates for consumer protection and safety in this province. One is the member from Trinity—Spadina, and of course we spoke to his important work in his riding on behalf of all Ontarians regarding elevator availability.

And then there's the MPP for Etobicoke Centre and his work on, I think, Bill 28, an act to prohibit unsolicited phone calls. More recently, he joined me when we finalized the legislation and made the announcement about banning unsolicited door-to-door sales. That legislation actually came into effect last month, on March 1. We're seeing already an immediate difference in terms of complaints by vulnerable customers who have been faced with the bad actors out there, in terms of whether it's water heaters, appliances of other kinds or furnaces. That was a top complaint for consumers in our province.

It's really important that I acknowledge those three MPPs very strongly. The ideas for much of our consumer protection legislation have come from them in this term. I'm very appreciative of the work they do. It's been a great collaboration. I'm very pleased our government has been able to introduce so much excellent, progressive—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Seeing that it's 10:15, the House will be recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030

WEARING OF JERSEYS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order, government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that everyone be permitted to wear sports jerseys in the legislative chamber today in memory of the victims of the Humboldt Broncos bus crash.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent that everyone be permitted to wear sports jerseys in the legislative chamber today in memory of the victims of the Humboldt Broncos bus crash. Do we agree? Agreed.

Just so that everyone is aware, all of the Legislatures in the entire country have made the same motion and we're very proud of that.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I will say that I would have worn my 99 jersey, but the Speaker is to remain absolutely neutral. But my heart goes out to the circumstances.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to recognize a great group of Oxford constituents who are here to visit Queen's Park and have lunch with their MPP. In the gallery today are some of my nieces and nephews: Andrew Malcolm and his wife, Debby; Art and Janet Fuller; and Dean and Brenda Wood.

Welcome to Queen's Park. We're glad you could join us today for lunch.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'd like to introduce Louise Russo, who is here today. She's an advocate for victims' rights, anti-bullying and women's rights.

Louise Russo, thank you for being here.

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to introduce two constituents of mine who are here for the Attorney General's victim services awards. I'd like to welcome two of my close friends: William Stevenson, who I've always called Willy, and his wife, Kelly. They started the Do It for Aaron Foundation. They're great people.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I would like to extend a very warm welcome to a constituent of mine, Dorothy-Jean Evans, who was also acknowledged by the Attorney General today for the victim services awards, and her sister Jaime Jensen.

I would also like to welcome Dawn Lavell-Harvard, the president of the Ontario Native Women's Association, who was acknowledged for the same reason—congratulations—and her mother, Jeannette Corbiere Lavell.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: It gives me great pleasure to introduce Tamil friends of mine in the gallery above us: Shan Sahathevan and Chezian Bahavatsingam.

Thirty-five other people are coming from the Tamil community to see us place a motion on the desk today calling for the removal of the terrorist designation from the Tamil Tigers.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to welcome Joel Hertz, former trustee for York Region District School Board, for Thornhill, as well as Peter Hominuk. Bienvenue encore. Il est souvent ici.

And I want to thank my son Josh for giving me his hockey jersey to wear. I think he wore it in grade 3.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: It gives me great pleasure this morning to recognize a constituent of mine: B.J. Tycoles, who has been selected as a recipient of the Attorney General's Victim Services Award of Distinction for 2018.

Also in the House is a proud person from Hamilton, Deputy Chief Dan Kinsella, who's here to recognize another recipient from Hamilton, Gaye Yachetti, who is here today.

Et, aussi, je sais qu'on a reconnu la présence de Peter Hominuk, mais Peter n'est pas ici pour l'AFO. Il est ici comme papa, monsieur le Président. Sa fille, Émilie Hominuk, est une page avec nous. Je remercie Peter de son dévouement comme papa.

Mr. Bill Walker: I'd like to welcome Ed and Anne Hahn from Hanover in the great riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, who are in the upper gallery. Welcome. They're having lunch with me at In Camera.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I would like to welcome my good friend Suze Morrison, formerly of London, who is here today for the victim services awards and is now the proud NDP candidate in Toronto Centre. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I too want to welcome two recipients of the Victim Services Awards of Distinction who are joining us today: Sureya Ibrahim, who's from the Centre for Community Learning and Development, as well as Joanne Green, representing the Shape Your Life boxing program. Welcome.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I would like to welcome to the Legislature today Faye Cassista, who is a recipient of the Attorney General's Victim Services Awards of Distinction this year, from the Victim Services of Renfrew County. She is joined today by Lisa Oegema, who is the executive director of victim services. Welcome.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: The page captain is Ekroop Walia from the great riding of Mississauga-Brampton South. Her mother, Manpreet Kaur Walia, her father, Randhir Walia, and brother Keerat Walia are here to watch question period. They will be in the members' gallery this morning. Welcome to the Queen's Park.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I would like to welcome several people here today from the 2018 AG award recipients: Simone Bell from the anti-human trafficking services of Voicefound, and her partner, Philippe Gibeault; also, from East Metro Youth Services, Carly Kalish and her husband, Jonathan Laski.

I'll also put a welcome out to Stephanie Alves from the Gatehouse Child Abuse Investigation and Support

Site and all of the award recipients today. Welcome to the Legislature.

Hon. Reza Moridi: Please join me in welcoming Mr. Joseph Antony, father of Cynthia Antony, who happens to be the legislative assistant to Mr. Yvan Baker, MPP for Etobicoke Centre.

Mr. Bill Walker: I would like to welcome Tamara House, a Lyme disease advocate from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, who had a very informative meeting with me this morning. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: On behalf of my seatmate, the member from Trinity-Spadina, I would like to welcome the family of today's page captain, Rhys Hoskins. Please welcome—they will be coming shortly—Dr. Samantha Nutt and our good friend Dr. Eric Hoskins.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I would like to welcome in the gallery today Dr. Lavell-Harvard, who was a recipient this morning of the victim services award. I couldn't be at the ceremony, but we certainly welcome a very distinguished person from Peterborough riding.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further introductions?

Today in the public gallery—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Oh. Introductions?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Yes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker. I also want to ask the House to welcome and congratulate all of the recipients of the Ontario Victim Services Awards of Distinction. These are incredible, remarkable Ontarians who are doing inspiring work, so please give them a big round of applause for the work they've done.

Applause.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I will highlight two recipients from my community of Ottawa and particularly Ottawa Centre. I want to congratulate Simone Bell of Voice-found and Sunny Marriner of the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre. Congratulations to both of you.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: Like many members here today, I want to welcome my award recipients from Halton: Diane Beaulieu, the executive director at Halton Women's Place, who is in the members' gallery today, joined by Caroline Hogwood. They were both awarded the Attorney General's Victim Services Awards of Distinction this morning. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As I was saying, in the public gallery is an individual from the riding of Brant. Not only is she special because her name coincidentally is Brant—Joanna Brant—but also because of her career of supporting survivors of sexual violence and fighting for change in our riding and in the province. She has been the executive director of the Sexual Assault Centre of Brant and Nova Vita for the last 20 years. Welcome, Joanna, and thank you for the hard work that you've been doing.

Applause.

1040

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have a couple of quick announcements, just before we get started. After question period, we are asking all those people who are wearing the jerseys of the Ontario Legiskaters to return them to either the member from Prince Edward-Hastings or the member from Mississauga-Streetsville. They're quite concerned that they might go missing.

I also would advise you that we do have a photographer available for the entire Legislature who are wearing jerseys who wish to go down to the main staircase to have a picture taken. I will assure you that the picture will be shared with Saskatchewan.

I thank you very much for what you've done today. It's very meaningful, and it lets people know who we are.

Applause.

WEARING OF JERSEY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order, the member from Eglinton-Lawrence.

Mr. Mike Colle: I ask for unanimous consent that the member from St. Catharines be allowed to wear a Maple Leafs sweater, because I know he burned his Sabres sweater. So let's get him to wear the Leafs sweater.

Laughter.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have to follow the rules. There has been a request for unanimous consent that the member from St. Catharines, our dean, wear the Toronto Maple Leafs jersey. Do we agree? Agreed.

It is therefore now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Minister of Finance. Just hours after the government tabled its election document last week, the minister appeared on TVO's The Agenda with Steve Paikin. His comments, quite frankly, were shocking. It actually seems to us that the minister had not read the budget document. Five times—five times—the minister made statements that weren't accurate. In fact, the polar opposite of those statements were actually true.

The most egregious of those was to suggest the deficit was “slayed” when he's forecasting six straight years of deficits and \$32 billion more in deficits. How can that be “slayed”? Speaker, to the minister: Who does he think he's trying to fool?

Hon. Charles Sousa: We underwent a great recession, the largest in the world at this time. Many Ontarians fought hard to continue to provide some stimulus, and we partnered in that stimulus. We invested heavily, contrary to what they wanted us to do, which is to do across-the-board cuts and put the economy in harm's way. We went from a \$19-billion deficit at the depth of the recession—so did the Conservative federal government. They had a

50-some-odd-billion-dollar deficit. We then fought hard to invest and to bring down that deficit. Not only did we bring it down to zero this year, we have a \$600-million surplus.

We're proud of the work that the people of Ontario have done to fight hard to bring our economy to lead Canada.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the minister: Well, just as he repeated here, the minister on TV tried to claim the books were balanced when he first had to use the reserves. Good luck trying to convince the Auditor General of that, by the way, who has three different versions for him.

But let's continue with the inaccuracies. The minister also claimed job creation numbers will "be 140,000 every year." However, when you turn to page 193 of the budget, it shows declines in job creation every year, from 121,000 this year all the way down to 60,000 jobs in two years. It's no wonder that people think the minister did not read his own budget.

To the minister: Why would Ontario voters trust him when he's making such blatant comments?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Not only do we have a \$600-million surplus this year, and third-quarter results show it, and that's an independent review of the books of the government—that is what is provided. Furthermore, it's independent economists and those outside of government who are saying this. We have a solid economic performance. Ontario's economy has grown more than Canada's and other G7 countries.

We also have the quality of those job gains: over 800,000 net new jobs since the recession, the majority of which are full-time, high-paying jobs in our province.

Thirdly, the proof is in the numbers. Our unemployment rate is the lowest it's been in two decades. We're going to continue fighting for Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Final supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the minister: The Auditor General quotes his numbers as "bogus." The minister insisted we are "the top" in "foreign direct investment"; well, Speaker, we've fallen to third. He knows this, because I remind him in this Legislature many, many, many times.

He seemed to be trying to calm the jittery markets by saying Ontario's debt to GDP is remaining "the same," and then "tapering down." The budget clearly shows our net debt to GDP is going up by half a point, not remaining the same and not tapering down. It's growing from 37.1% to 37.6% this year, all the way up to 38.6% in 2021. That's just absolutely, blatantly wrong.

So I would say to the minister again: Why would Ontario's voters trust this minister, this government and this Premier when they're making such blatant comments?

Hon. Charles Sousa: There are 50 states, 13 provinces and territories, and Ontario this year is number

three of our foreign direct investment in North America. That is pretty much top of the heap when it comes to supporting economic growth and investments in our province.

Our debt to GDP is an important number to assess. When we compare Ontario to other provinces, Quebec, for example, is still hovering close to 50%. Ontario is indeed, as mentioned, 37.1%, down from a high of 39.3%, and it was estimated to be at around 41%. We have indeed reduced our debt to GDP, and we are indeed taking the necessary steps to benefit future generations from the investments we're making. Three quarters of the debt that we are taking is for capital improvement: roads, bridges, hospitals, public transit—things that enable us to be competitive.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Yes, we're in warnings. I'll get a handle on it.

New question.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Steve Clark: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, the judge in the gas plant scandal had some damning words in his sentence.

My question is simple: Does the Premier condemn the Liberal government's "affront to, and ... attack upon, democratic institutions and values"?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Attorney General.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: As I have said before in this House, and all members know, our Premier and our government take the responsibility around transparency and accountability very seriously.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Huron-Bruce is warned.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That doesn't make any difference.

Carry on.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: We are committed to being an open, accountable and transparent government. As a result, from the moment the Premier came into office, she made sure that we strengthened the laws around accountability to ensure that there are good policies in place for document retention and to train all staff, including the chiefs of staff to ministers, so they know exactly what their responsibilities and obligations are under the law.

1050

Speaker, that is how the government should always operate, and that is how our government is very much committed to openness and transparency, as demonstrated by our Premier and this government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm not surprised that the Premier doesn't want to answer, because the gas plants scandal has her fingerprints all over it. The Premier was the campaign co-chair. She signed the order in council, and then

her first order of business after the 2014 election was to shut down the gas plants committee.

Speaker, isn't the Premier just as responsible for attacking our democratic institutions?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: The Premier has always worked hard to make sure that our government is open and accountable. She promised and delivered on completely opening the government, and we have done so in an unprecedented manner. We have done things like sending directives to all political staff. We have developed mandatory training programs. We have appointed chiefs of staff who are accountable for record-keeping. We have improved archiving requirements. We have also brought in an accountability act that would prohibit the wilful deletion of records and will create a penalty for doing so.

We have also worked very closely with the Integrity Commissioner and the Information and Privacy Commissioner. They in fact have endorsed the steps we have taken, and we continue to work with them to enforce these rules.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Steve Clark: Back to the Premier: Mr. Livingston attempted to thwart the core values of accountability and transparency that are essential to the proper functioning of a parliamentary democracy. Justice Lipson said—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Durham is warned, and the member from Barrie is warned.

Carry on.

Mr. Steve Clark: Justice Lipson said, "Mr. Livingston's plan was to deny the public the right to know about government decision-making with regard to the gas plant controversy."

Mr. Speaker, I want the Premier to answer, and so do Ontarians: Does the Premier condemn this Liberal operative's actions?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: The Premier and the government are absolutely committed to accountability and transparency. That is why the Premier and her government have taken concrete, decisive steps to ensure that we have the rules—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: The Premier and the government have taken decisive action so that we have the laws, the rules and the appropriate training—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Okay. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, the training is in place to ensure that document retention is taken seriously and the rules that are put in place are fully complied with.

I want to quote, for example, what the Information and Privacy Commissioner at that time said: "I have appreci-

ated the co-operation I have received from Premier Kathleen Wynne and the Minister of Government Services.... The Premier issued a directive in accordance with the recommendations made in the report and committed the government"—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday I asked the Premier a really simple question, but I couldn't get an answer, so I'm going to try again. Does the Premier believe that Ontario has a hallway medicine crisis?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We have demonstrated in our budget that we recognize that, because of growth and because of aging demographics, there is a need to make a substantial investment in hospitals in this province: \$822 million, which is the quantum of funding that the Ontario Hospital Association has identified as needed. That's a nearly 5% increase.

We recognize that hospitals need support in order to be able to get health care to people more quickly. That's why that is in our budget.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: For years, the Liberal government froze and underfunded hospitals. The hallway medicine crisis that we're facing right now was absolutely, totally predictable. Overcrowding is the direct result of Liberal decisions.

Yesterday, the Premier said to me, "Why would the Premier of the province of Ontario want to create a health care crisis in hospitals?" That's a good question. Why did she, Speaker?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, I didn't, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of the funding, every single year it has increased in health care, Mr. Speaker. With every single budget, health care funding has increased, every year. In this budget, we have absolutely recognized a number of things, like the hospital funding that I just talked about of \$822 million.

But Mr. Speaker, mental health supports are critical. You can't have good health if you don't have good mental health. Quite frankly, as a society, we are catching up; 20 or 25 years ago there was not nearly the awareness of the mental health challenges that there is now. So we're putting \$2.1 billion into mental health.

We also recognize that, with the aging population, there needs to be a continuum of supports. We have been investing billions of dollars into home care. We recognize that more is needed there.

Also, we have committed to building 30,000 new long-term-care beds. There is a range of supports that we have put in this budget in recognition of the importance of the health care system.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: There is cause and there is effect. The Liberals froze and underfunded hospital budgets. That is the cause. And now we have hospitals packed to the gills, and people are being treated in hallways. That's the effect. Hallway medicine didn't just happen; it was caused.

Why did this Premier cause today's hallway medicine crisis?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, let's look at what some of the external analysts have said about what's happening in Ontario. There are a number of third parties that have validated our health care system as one of the best in the world.

Most recently, the CIHI report has come out. CIHI, the Fraser Institute and the Wait Time Alliance have all agreed that wait times in Ontario are the best wait times in the country, Mr. Speaker. That is not the result of an underfunded health care system. That is the result of a health care system that has been funded, that has been nourished, that has worked in partnership with government to make sure that the investments are there when they're needed.

The fact is that we have an aging demographic. The fact is that the health care system is going through a transformation. More people want care in the community. We have funded that care, but we know that there is more to do. That is why our budget has the supports in it that it does.

DENTAL CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. Last week in Chatham I met a young woman named Christine. She's a dental hygienist who owns and operates Bright Smiles, a community dental hygiene office. She saw how many people in her community couldn't afford dental care. They couldn't get dental care, so she set up days when anyone could come in for a free cleaning.

People like Christine are incredible, and I congratulate her for her big heart, but we can't build dental care on people who are willing to offer care for free. Why doesn't the Premier have a plan to get people the dental care that they need?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, again, I appreciate that the leader of the third party is now starting to talk about dental care.

We've been working on putting in place supports through the Healthy Smiles program, expanding that program, working with the dentists in this province to fill what is, quite frankly, a gap in medicare. As I've said many times, if we were building a medicare system today in this country, pharmacare and dental care would be included. They were not, and so what we are doing here in Ontario is we are taking steps to make sure that people get the care they need.

Last year, with OHIP+, we made the biggest step forward in expanding medicare in a generation. All

children from birth until their 25th birthday receive free prescription medication—all medication, 4,400 medications that are on the formulary; not a few medications, but all of the medications on the formulary.

I'll speak more about the dental plan in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, when I was at Bright Smiles, I met a gentleman named Justin, who was there with his daughter. His daughter had five cavities. The Premier's plan to give Justin 50 bucks for five fillings doesn't fix the problem, but Justin told me that dental care for everyone would. Here's what he said: It means "an end to the terrible stress we feel every time the kids need medicine, a checkup at the dentist or a filling." That's what Justin told me.

1100

Why is the Premier ignoring the dental needs of Justin's daughter?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: That quote is very telling, because the stress about medicine is no longer something that Justin has to worry about.

I have every sympathy for a family that can't afford to get prescription medication or dental care for their children. It's a good thing that now that family doesn't have to worry about paying for prescription medication.

Mr. Speaker, let's be honest about what the plan is that we've put forward. It's \$700 for a family of two adults and two kids, and that \$700 can be used to offset costs. I know it's not perfect. I know that a full, national dental care plan would be perfect. I know that a full pharmacare plan would be perfect. But we've taken huge steps forward, and we will continue to move forward in this province as we work to fill that gap in medicare that does need to be filled.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Getting your mouth looked after should not be a luxury. It should be a fact of life in our province. As a country, we've decided that everyone should be able to see a doctor when they're sick, not just when they can afford it. I think people should be able to see a dentist, too, Speaker. Why doesn't the Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: As the Premier said, we do welcome the third party coming to these conclusions in the recent past. Of course, we have, as we've said so many times, our new Ontario drug and dental program, but we're building on what we've achieved over the last many years: our Healthy Smiles program, some 470,000 children who can access important dental services. Of course, this number continues to grow because we continue to expand the program. Since 2016, the number of children enrolled in the Healthy Smiles program has increased by some 45,000 children.

We have more to do. We also support public health units, some 200 clinics that public health actually provides for dental care across this province.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. The CEO of Hydro One has been handed a \$1.7-million bonus. All in, his take-home pay is now over \$6 million. This is unacceptable at a time when seniors are fearful of heating their homes, when businesses are shutting down, when taxpayers are suffering, all due to skyrocketing hydro bills.

Mr. Speaker, how can the Premier continue to support her six-million-dollar man?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the leader—not the House leader, but the leader, Mr. Ford—is talking about firing the CEO of Hydro One and firing the board. I think that is something that he has said he is going to do. I have no idea how that will help any person in the province of Ontario. The reality is that that will not take one cent off anyone's electricity bill. You know, there's a guy to the south of us, Mr. Speaker, who is governing by firing, and I'm not sure that's going so well.

The reality is that we need to know what this party is talking about when they're talking about how they are going to run the electricity system in this province. What's the plan? How's that going to work?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: Our PC leader Doug Ford's first action as Premier will bring an end to this outrageous Hydro One contract. The PCs will use every power at the disposal of this government to remove the six-million-dollar man, as well as the entire board.

Mr. Speaker, does the Premier support removing her six-million-dollar man?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It must be a bit galling for the member opposite to have to stand up and put that out as policy. You know, Mr. Speaker, policy is about how things actually work. Policy is about how you get supports to people. Policy is about how we build this province up so that it has a bright economic future. That's not policy, Mr. Speaker. That's a slogan masquerading as policy. We need to know what Mr. Ford stands for.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Warnings are still in effect.

New question?

LABOUR DISPUTE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier. Speaker, 3,000 York University TAs, RAs and contract faculty are still on the picket line. They're taking a stand against insecure academic jobs and the chronic underfunding of our post-secondary system, even if this Liberal government is not.

When the member for Welland raised this issue earlier this week, the minister said she was urging both sides to get back to the table. One side is at the table and has been

for the last six weeks, yet York University, a publicly funded institution, sat down for just one day of bargaining. Now, instead of negotiating with their employees, they have requested binding arbitration.

Will the Premier step up, show some leadership and direct York University to get back to the table?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. This is a situation that is concerning, Speaker; it involves our students. We know that the priority has to be to settle this agreement and focus on students' education.

My call to both sides in this situation is that they get back to the table and recognize that compromise is needed on both sides. If we put the needs of the students first and their learning—I ask both sides to do that and to come to an agreement that is fair for both parties.

Collective bargaining is something that we support on this side of the House. We're really calling on both sides in this instance to come together, to come to the table and discuss an agreement that is fair to both sides. That might require compromises on both sides so that we prioritize the needs of our students so that they can complete their learning. That is what we're—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: The integrity of the bargaining process is not the only issue at stake. The root of the problem is years of underfunding of post-secondary education in Ontario, now the lowest in the country, which has led to an explosion of insecure, unstable and low-paid academic jobs and undermined the quality of post-secondary education.

It's not only Carleton and York where these issues have come to a head. Western graduate teaching assistants may soon be on strike and other universities may follow. Ultimately, as we know, it is students who are most affected by these labour disputes.

After 15 years in office, why has this Liberal government allowed Ontario to sink to the bottom in terms of per-student funding for post-secondary education?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: My primary concern in this situation is for the students. It's very important that we focus on getting both parties back so that they can come to a fair agreement, and the best agreements are done at the bargaining table.

The member opposite is simply wrong when she talks down our post-secondary education system. Ontario has a world-class, recognized education system at the post-secondary level. And do you know what, Mr. Speaker? We have made, under the leadership of our Premier, historic investments with the new transformation of OSAP. Some 235,000 students are going to school with free access to tuition under that program. It's creating more access: 34% more indigenous students are accessing post-secondary through the new OSAP; we have more lone-parent households accessing. We're going to continue to build up our education—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question?

COAL-FIRED GENERATING STATIONS

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: My question is for the Minister of Energy. This weekend, Ontario will celebrate its four-year anniversary of the phase-out of coal-fired power plants. This move remains the single largest greenhouse gas reduction initiative completed in all of North America. The elimination of coal-fired plants has been a major contributing factor in improving the quality of the air that we breathe.

1110

Thanks to clean air and clean energy, Ontario has saved more than \$4 billion in annual health and environmental costs. We also saw the number of smog days drop from 53 in 2005 to zero in 2017. Can the minister please explain how the elimination of coal-fired plants places Ontario at a competitive advantage?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I want to thank the member from Barrie for that question and, of course, for all of her hard work. Mr. Speaker, our government is proud to be a leader in the global fight against climate change. As of last year, the electricity we consume is over 95% carbon-free, thanks to the early action we took to close coal-fired power generation plants.

The overwhelming consensus from climate and health experts, both in government and in independent organizations, is clear: This has resulted in significant reductions in air pollution and improves the lives of the people of Ontario.

Just earlier this week, the Environmental Commissioner released a report in which she praised our government's action on eliminating coal, saying, "Taking coal out of electricity dramatically reduced Ontario's greenhouse gas emissions, and has improved air quality and public health." As you can see, unlike the official opposition, our government is taking concrete action to ensure that our kids and grandkids can breathe clean air.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you, Minister. It's wonderful to hear that our electricity generation in 2017 was over 95% free of the emissions that cause climate change. I understand that this is thanks to the nearly \$70 billion that has been invested to modernize the system since 2003. This benefits the people of Ontario today by ensuring that we have clean air. In 2012, the last year of coal-fired power in the province, we had 30 smog days. In the six years since, we've only had three.

These investments have also provided good jobs and opportunities to invest in future generations. I understand that the Lakeview Generating Station, a former coal plant, has been sold. Can the minister please provide details on what the sale of this land means to the province?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I'm very pleased to talk about the sale of the Lakeview lands. Not only does this 177-acre site give us a chance to transform those industrial lands into a waterfront destination where people can play and work and raise a family, but the former coal plant—

the Four Sisters, as it was known—was the worst polluter in a generation of pollution. Now it's generating over \$200 million to the Trillium Trust, money that will be reinvested in public transit, transportation and infrastructure right across Ontario. This is part of our \$230 billion over 14 years to build Ontario up.

I'd like to also acknowledge that Inspiration Lakeview, to revitalize this precious waterfront, will enable mixed use and enable our local community to do better. We've had over 30 to 40 smog days in the past. As a result of these initiatives, we've had zero this year.

The late Jim Tovey, who just died a few months ago, was a champion for Inspiration Lakeview, and I want to acknowledge his efforts in our community as well.

LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr. Lorne Coe: My question is for the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development. This is the sixth week that more than 51,000 York University students are not in class. The Liberal government failed to act last fall when they let the community college strike go on for five long weeks, putting the students' semester in jeopardy. Yet again, the Premier and the minister have failed to show leadership for Ontario's post-secondary students. How many more weeks of class will York University's 51,000 students have to miss before the Liberal government takes action?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: This is a very challenging situation. I know that students are feeling the effects of the strike, but the university has worked to keep the school open so that a portion of their students can continue while the strike is happening. I know this is difficult on all parties, but the school has remained open.

What we are asking here is that both sides return to the bargaining table, that they think about what compromises can be made on both sides so that they can come to a resolution that is fair to all parties, that is fair to both sides. The best deals are done at the collective bargaining table. That's what we believe on this side of the House. We respect the bargaining process, and at this point we're asking both sides to come back and to strike a fair deal that is fair.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Back to the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development: On April 10, 2018, the president of York University wrote a letter to the Canadian Union of Public Employees asking that this matter be sent to binding arbitration. The letter said, "In just over one more week, we will be facing a possible loss of the summer term, with even further consequences for our students." Speaker, will the Liberal government act now to save the semester of 51,000 York University students?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member for the question about York University. Speaker, it's at times like this that we need to remember that Ontario has got one of the best track records when it comes to collect-

ive bargaining. Between 98% and 99% of agreements year after year are reached without either of the parties having to resort to a strike or to a lockout.

This is an exceptional circumstance. Both sides, obviously, are availing themselves of their rights under the process. I would ask members to remember that the process needs to be respected. The best deals, the best long-term deals in the interest of the students, in the interest of the employees and in the interest of the people who run the administration at York University are best reached by all of those parties coming to an agreement around the table.

We're confident, Speaker, that if the right attitude is brought to this, that agreement can be reached and the students can be put first.

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Acting Premier. In her new budget, the Premier proposed that the province assume ownership of Toronto's subway lines. This is the same idea one former Conservative leader floated back in 2014, which was roundly condemned at the time by Toronto city councillors, the TTC, transit advocates and the public. It is also the same idea that the Conservatives are floating in their current plan, which again has been roundly condemned. Why would the Premier even consider breaking up the TTC?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. Speaker, the TTC subway system has been an incredible bonus to many, many residents in Toronto. This is very much a world-class transit system, and we continue to operate it and collaborate with the city of Toronto to make sure that we can continue increasing service and continue to increase world-class service on this line.

I know that, with the increasing costs, as we continue to build this system out, there has been some discussion amongst all of our different stakeholders regarding the cost of running the subway and how best to offset it. These discussions are just starting to see if it is feasible that we will be entering into any agreement with the city of Toronto. But these discussions are worth having in the short term. I'll answer more in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: When the TTC is properly funded, Speaker, it works. When the province paid 50% of the TTC's operating costs, it was the envy of the world. The TTC works because the buses, streetcars and subways all work together in an integrated network. But now the Premier is proposing to take a page from the Conservatives, the same people who filled in a hole where the Eglinton subway should be and then cut off provincial funding for TTC operations.

The Premier is proposing to break up the TTC. Will the Premier stop listening to the Conservatives and start listening to transit riders who want their transit system to be properly funded, not broken up?

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: We are continuing to move forward with an unprecedented transit build in the GTHA, much of which is taking place right here in Toronto. And if the member opposite was listening correctly, she would hear that some of the announcements with the integrated fare announcement, with the continuing transit build of SmartTrack as well as GO stations and RER—unprecedented, historic build-outs.

1120

But specifically, the province will begin discussions with the city of Toronto to determine whether provincial ownership of TTC subway lines could provide better transit services for residents in the GTHA, but also allow for a better sharing of costs for transit expansion between the province and the city of Toronto. We are very happy to have those discussions.

I want to be clear: At this time, we're engaging with the city to consider what options are available and what could lead to the best results for transit users. Any decision that we make will be based on evidence and will happen in collaboration and consultation with the city of Toronto.

While we appreciate the NDP's ideas on support for multiple transit operations, the NDP prove once again that they have no real plan for helping to build the much-needed transit in this city.

TAMIL COMMUNITY

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Minister, the Tamil people of Sri Lanka have suffered persecution by their government continuously since independence in 1948. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam were created as a military body to protect the Tamil people. The Tamil Tigers were a strong fighting force. The Canadian government was persuaded to place a terrorist designation on the Tamil Tigers in 2006.

The civil war in Sri Lanka ended in 2009, with the complete decimation of the Tigers. The terrorist designation is not needed anymore.

Minister, will you support the request of Tamil Canadians to ask the government of Canada to remove the terrorist designation?

Hon. Laura Albanese: I'd like to thank the member from Carleton-Mississippi Mills for the question. The member is correct: This is an issue that is solely under federal jurisdiction, as public safety falls under their purview.

I sympathize with the community for the tragic, decades-long conflict, which ended in 2009. The tragic war in Sri Lanka resulted in the unnecessary loss of tens of thousands of civilians' lives, many within the Tamil community.

As Canadians, we remain committed to the values that we cherish—justice, human rights and fairness—both in Canada and in Sri Lanka. Countries like Canada have all recognized that grave atrocities took place during the war in Sri Lanka; Ontario does as well.

Our focus as a government is our engagement with the Northern Province of Sri Lanka, as well as the vibrant Tamil community here in Ontario, and I'll elaborate in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Minister, the terrorist designation on the Tamil Tigers still exists. It is like a black cloud hanging over the heads of Tamil Canadians. The terrorist designation effectively causes a social stigmatization of Tamil people in Canada. Tamil people cannot even publicly mourn and remember their fallen people at their Maaveerar Naal remembrance services on November 27 of each year.

The Tamil Tigers no longer exist. They will never be a fighting force again. Minister, will you come to Parliament Hill with Tamil Canadian leaders and me to ask the Canadian government to remove the terrorist designation?

Hon. Laura Albanese: Thank you to the member for the question once again.

Our Premier was the first head of government in Ontario to host the Chief Minister of the Tamil-dominated Northern Province of Sri Lanka during his January 2017 visit to Canada. This was an opportunity for the Premier to convey Ontario's strong interest in seeing and supporting further progress in strengthening this relationship.

Following their meeting last year, there was a continued dialogue between our two jurisdictions, and just this week, the Premier sent a letter to the Chief Minister proposing a possible memorandum of understanding on women's economic empowerment.

Mr. Speaker, one of Ontario's greatest strengths is the diverse mosaic of our people. We are proud of our vibrant Tamil community and the contributions that they have made and that they continue to make in all fields throughout our province.

We were also the first to declare, as a Legislature, Tamil Heritage Month.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: My question is for the Minister of Education. Our government is investing more in the care and services that people across Ontario rely on. I'm proud that our government is committed to easing the pressure families are facing by taking action to improve mental health supports in schools. We know that nearly one in three Ontarians will face a mental health or addictions issue over the course of their lifetime. This includes the two million young people in our schools, reflecting the future of this province.

In my riding of Kingston and the Islands I represent a diverse group of people who have courageously shared the stories of themselves, their friends or members of their family facing mental health challenges.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: What is our government doing to support well-being and a better, brighter future for the students of Ontario?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you to the member from Kingston and the Islands for this very important question.

We know that our fast-paced lives mean that our young people today are dealing with increasing demands and pressures. Those challenges can mean our students are dealing with serious stress and anxiety in their lives. That's why our government recently announced an additional \$2.1 billion for mental health and addictions services in Ontario. This is the largest provincial investment of its kind in Canadian history.

Just think about that. For our students and educators, these funds mean more support in our school community, and more help. In fact, our budget adds 400 mental health workers to high schools across the province; enhances our educators' and school staff mental health literacy; and equips our students with social-emotional learning skills beginning as early as in kindergarten.

Speaker, our students can't learn or be successful if they aren't happy and healthy and well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I'm proud to be part of a government that is driving student success with more classroom supports. I know that we are doing more to better prepare children for the future by investing in care, not cuts. We can't afford to cut vital services that mean so much to students, their families and staff. One billion dollars in cuts from our schools will mean that at least 7,000 teachers, early childhood educators and educational assistants would be fired, putting all of this progress in jeopardy.

Adding 400 new mental health workers in schools is part of our government's plan to support care, create opportunity and make life more affordable for the people of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please tell us more about what our government is doing to support student well-being in our schools?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thanks again to the member for the question.

We know mental health challenges can begin at an early age. In fact, experts say up to 70% of mental health and addictions issues begin in childhood. That's why it's important to make sure supports are there when students need them most. In fact, educators can often recognize if a student might be struggling with a mental health concern, like panic attacks, anxiety or depression.

That's why our plan puts direct supports in place in the classroom, in the curriculum and on school boards. We want to ensure that our young people get the tools and resources they need to be able to meet their mental health challenges. We're adding 2,000 more educators to our schools, including psychologists, social workers and guidance counsellors, and increasing education funding by \$625 million, starting next year.

Mr. Speaker, we heard from students that these are the supports they need to be successful, and that's why students are at the centre of this historic announcement toward mental health supports.

TREE SEED SERVICES

Mr. Jim Wilson: To the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry: Industry experts as well as environmental advocates in my riding and across the province tell me that they continue to receive template responses from this government when it comes to concerns raised over the closure of the Ontario Tree Seed Plant.

The decision to close the facility was made by this government without any consultation with the industry or the broader community. The government talks about a supposed new tree seed archive, but we've heard nothing about it.

What we do know is that a new archive will not support tree planting of any sort and that with the closure of the tree seed plant, the government is divesting the province of expertise, facilities and a network of people that will be gone forever.

1130

Without the Ontario Tree Seed Plant, how does the government plan to ensure a sufficient supply of high-quality, source-identified seed for dozens of native tree species throughout the province?

Hon. Nathalie Des Rosiers: Thank you for the question. Actually, the program that we are putting forward is to modernize the way in which tree seeds will be distributed in Ontario. It will be a better program that will be cheaper for Ontarians and will respect the quality that we want in the tree seed plants. We are committed to biodiversity and ensuring our natural heritage and committed to ensuring that Ontario seeds continue to be used in forest planting.

We knew that, indeed, 80% of the seeds were provided by the private market, and we are actually moving forward and creating a better program for Ontarians in that respect. I'm happy to provide more details in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Back to the minister: Tree growers across the province remain concerned about where they will find appropriate seed needed for future crops. They say the consequences will be an influx of unidentified seed sources into the Ontario market that favours cost over quality and adaptability. This works completely against the minister's new seed transfer policy.

They asked me to ask you: How will the government ensure that the private sector develops the capacity to plan for, collect, process and bank enough seed to respond to catastrophic events in Ontario, such as beetle and forest fire devastations, and can the government assure growers that the private sector will readily replace seed in time for normal annual reforestation projects?

Hon. Nathalie Des Rosiers: Thank you for the question. Actually, there are two instruments that the government has at its disposal: First of all, there's the seed zone policy that ensures that you provide the seeds in the appropriate zones in Ontario, ensuring that the appropriate trees are being planted. We want to preserve the natural heritage in doing so.

We also have what we have called the new genetic archives that are under way. I will certainly continue to work with you in trying to ensure that it does meet the needs of Ontarians.

I think the government is actually quite involved in ensuring that we have a modern system that responds to the range of needs for Ontarians in seed planting. We continue to be committed to ensuring biodiversity but also respecting our natural heritage in Ontario.

ROAD SAFETY

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Acting Premier. On Tuesday, the Minister of Transportation claimed that this government has already passed vulnerable road user laws, but road safety advocates across Ontario, including Friends and Families for Safe Streets, Cycle Toronto, Walk Toronto and Bike Law Canada, have repeatedly pointed out that this is not true. They have pointed out that in the vast majority of cases, a driver who seriously injures or kills a cyclist or pedestrian would not even be charged with the new careless driving offence but will plead down and escape any meaningful consequences for their actions. This happens every day.

Will the acting Premier or the Minister of Transportation, or anybody on that side of the House, commit today to fast-tracking Bill 37, which is a true, comprehensive vulnerable road user law?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you for the question. It's amazing to me that even with the information I gave this member on Tuesday she has not recognized that we passed a bill that our law enforcement officers were asking us to, in order to increase the penalties for careless driving causing death or bodily harm. It comes with up to a \$50,000 penalty, up to two years' imprisonment and a licence suspension for up to five years.

This is a new charge that was not previously available to our enforcement officers. It provides them with a strong tool, one that they have asked for and will help them to respond to these serious collisions in a very meaningful way.

It does take time to enact the bill. Officers need to be trained, and IT systems need to be changed so that they can respond to this. This is not enacted yet, until those very necessary pieces are done. But this new charge is the first of its kind in Canada and is incredibly important to our road users.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Mr. Speaker, Bill 37 defines and expands who vulnerable road users are. Your law does not do that. It does mandatory licence suspension, mandatory community service, mandatory driver training, and the offender must appear in a court for a victim impact statement. Right now, people who are injured or killed in this province—their families do not even get their day in court.

It is incredibly disappointing that the minister would claim that the new careless driving offence is a true

vulnerable road user law—it is not—especially after I told her about Anthony Smith, who was here on Tuesday. He is a cyclist who was seriously injured in an accident. He had a hundred medical appointments. The driver got a \$125 fine. Surely we can come to some common ground that this is not acceptable.

Will this government finally acknowledge that you do not have a vulnerable road user law that is comprehensive? And will you fast-track Bill 37? You only have 12 more days to do it.

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: I think that the member opposite misses the fact that we've heard from enforcement officers that they will use the tool. This is what they've been asking for, and they are looking for the full enactment of this tool to keep our roads safe for vulnerable users. It is there in the sentencing—it allows the judge to decide on the penalty depending on what issue is in front of them.

For the families, for our most vulnerable road users, including children and seniors and cyclists, we have a duty to do more and to do better. We will continue to ensure that the officers and the justice system have the tools they need to look after all road users. A new offence for careless driving causing death or bodily harm is exactly what they were asking for to do that.

We will continue to advocate for each and every road user in this province. It is up to all of us to ensure that all of us get home safely at the end of the day.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Arthur Potts: My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Over the past decade, our government has taken positive steps to reduce poverty and support low-income individuals in Ontario. However, while Ontario's economy is strong, I know that not everyone is experiencing the same opportunities.

In my riding of Beaches–East York, I have heard from constituents and anti-poverty advocates about the need to make substantial changes to our income security system. I've met regularly with interfaith leaders from our community who, on behalf of their congregations, believe that the 2018 election should be about voting to end poverty.

That's why, Speaker, guided by recommendations put forward by the income security working group and feedback from the public, we are moving toward a system that is more fair and supportive and that puts the needs of the person at the centre.

Will the minister please tell this House about our plans for continuing to support low-income Ontarians?

Hon. Michael Coteau: Thank you to the member for the question.

On this side of the House, we fundamentally believe that reform is necessary when we talk about income security.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the advocates who worked on the income security working group with us to

build the road map—more than 900 of them right across the province, who shared their ideas on how we can better position Ontario when it comes to supports for low-income Ontarians.

I'm pleased to be part of a government that, in its budget, has committed \$2.3 billion over the next three years for these substantial reforms. This is a huge contrast from when the Conservatives were in power. We know that the former Conservative government made an almost 25% cut to supports for low-income Ontarians—people who are injured, people who are sick, people who can't work. We have an opposite approach because we believe the best investment is investment into our—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Arthur Potts: I want to thank the minister for his exemplary work on making sure that all Ontarians get to participate fully in our society.

Our government knows that there is a need to make real change to reduce poverty in the province. It costs less to support inclusion and a better quality of life, to prevent illnesses, and to keep people from falling further behind.

I know that many anti-poverty advocates are proud of this government's unprecedented investments to support low-income Ontarians. In fact, Neil Hetherington, the CEO of the Daily Bread Food Bank, says, "With the measures in this budget, there are substantial commitments that help reduce barriers for people living in poverty.... This budget sets the stage for serious transformation of our province's income security system." Mr. Hetherington couldn't be more right.

Will the minister tell the House what other improvements this budget will include to help support low-income Ontarians?

Hon. Michael Coteau: Over the next three years, we'll see a 9% increase in ODSP and Ontario Works here in the province of Ontario. I think Ontarians need to pay attention to what comes forward in the next few weeks in regard to our budget and this commitment, and the alternatives proposed by other parties, in particular the Progressive Conservatives.

I think the best understanding of how well we do as a society here in Ontario is how well we work with those who need help: someone who has injured themselves in the workforce; someone who, because of a challenge, can't get to work to do the type of work to pull in the type of income necessary for their family. When you have a Progressive Conservative government that was in power and cut almost 25% off of that funding line, to me, people need to pay attention because—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question?

ÉDUCATION EN FRANÇAIS

M^{me} Gila Martow: C'est une question pour la ministre des Affaires francophones. On a un problème

chronique dans l'accès aux services en français. Une très bonne solution contre la pénurie de professionnels bilingues dans la fonction publique serait l'éducation en français pour les étudiants de l'Ontario, qui pourraient se joindre à la fonction publique et être ainsi la solution à cette pénurie.

Malheureusement, l'Ontario fait également face à un manque de professeurs de français dans nos écoles. Ce gouvernement a déjà été averti par des experts, et par moi-même, que les compressions budgétaires par les libéraux dans la formation des enseignants en français auraient des conséquences horribles.

Le mois dernier, j'ai même demandé à la ministre de l'Éducation si elle avait un plan; malheureusement, pas de réponse. Une réponse de la ministre, s'il vous plaît—

Le Président (L'hon. Dave Levac): Merci. La ministre?

L'hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Merci beaucoup pour la question. C'est toujours un plaisir pour moi de m'adresser en français et de répondre aux questions francophones.

Écoutez, on est fier des accomplissements de notre gouvernement envers la francophonie. Nous réalisons qu'il y a toujours plus à faire. Notre réalité en ce moment—l'engouement qu'on voit dans notre système scolaire, au niveau du dynamisme de nos enseignants et des parents qui choisissent l'éducation d'immersion, c'est vraiment extraordinaire. On doit être fier de cet accomplissement et de ces choses-là.

Donc, pour moi, ce qui est important, c'est de travailler avec nos conseils scolaires. Je sais que la ministre de l'Éducation a un plan, qui a débuté avec sa prédécesseure, la ministre Hunter, et maintenant, ma collègue Indira Naidoo-Harris continue de travailler avec le système scolaire pour développer un système qui va aider à améliorer la situation des parents.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion number 5, relating to allocation of time on Bill 6, An Act to enact the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services Act, 2018 and the Correctional Services and Reintegration Act, 2018, to make related amendments to other Acts, to repeal an Act and to revoke a regulation.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1144 to 1149.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All members, please take your seats.

On April 11, 2018, Mr. Leal moved government notice of motion number 5 relating to allocation of time on Bill 6, An Act to enact the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services Act, 2018 and the Correctional Services and Reintegration Act, 2018, to

make related amendments to other Acts, to repeal an Act and to revoke a regulation.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Baker, Yvan
Ballard, Chris
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bradley, James J.
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Delaney, Bob
Des Rosiers, Nathalie
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
Dong, Han

Duguid, Brad
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fraser, John
Gravelle, Michael
Hoggarth, Ann
Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Kiwala, Sophie
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
Matthews, Deborah
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor

Milczyn, Peter Z.
Moridi, Reza
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sousa, Charles
Takhar, Harinder S.
Thibeault, Glenn
Vernile, Daiene
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon
Clark, Steve
Coe, Lorne
Fife, Catherine
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne
Gretzky, Lisa

Hardeman, Ernie
MacLeod, Lisa
Martow, Gila
McDonell, Jim
Miller, Norm
Munro, Julia
Natyshak, Taras
Oosterhoff, Sam
Pettapiece, Randy

Scott, Laurie
Tabuns, Peter
Taylor, Monique
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vanhof, John
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 49; the nays are 26.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

PAY TRANSPARENCY ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018

SUR LA TRANSPARENCE SALARIALE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 3, An Act respecting transparency of pay in employment/ Projet de loi 3, Loi portant sur la transparence salariale.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 3, An Act respecting transparency of pay in employment.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1152 to 1153.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On March 26, 2018, Mr. Flynn moved second reading of Bill 3, An Act respecting transparency of pay in employment.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Baker, Yvan
Ballard, Chris
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bradley, James J.
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Delaney, Bob
Des Rosiers, Nathalie
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad
Fife, Catherine

Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fraser, John
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne
Gravelle, Michael
Gretzky, Lisa
Hoggarth, Ann
Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Kiwala, Sophie
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
Matthews, Deborah
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor

Milczyn, Peter Z.
Moridi, Reza
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir
Natyshak, Taras
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sousa, Charles
Tabuns, Peter
Takhar, Harinder S.
Taylor, Monique
Thibeault, Glenn
Vanthof, John
Vernile, Daiene
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon
Clark, Steve
Coe, Lorne
Hardeman, Ernie

MacLeod, Lisa
Martow, Gila
McDonell, Jim
Miller, Norm
Munro, Julia
Oosterhoff, Sam

Pettapiece, Randy
Scott, Laurie
Thompson, Lisa M.
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 57; the nays are 18.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated April 11, 2018, the bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

A point of order: the member from Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: Mr. Speaker, those of us in our Senators jerseys would like to meet with all those in Leafs jerseys out in the hall after we're done.

Laughter.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just two quick reminders: I've been asked to remind people to return jerseys to the people you've borrowed them from. The Legiskaters need to have them. And a reminder that, as a sign of our respect, we would like to take a picture of all of the members in the main staircase. We'll provide that to Humboldt and the Saskatchewan Legislature.

There being no further deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1156 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm happy to introduce once again Mr. Joel Hertz, a former trustee of York Region District School Board for Thornhill. Welcome to the Legislature, Joel.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would like to point out and thank the young people who have come in from a school—I don't know which one it is, but they are wearing jerseys on behalf of their class and their school in support of Humboldt. I thank you very much for doing that, young people. I appreciate it very much.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**POVERTY**

Mr. Lorne Coe: The Durham Catholic District School Board has embarked on a new three-year plan to support both students and families impacted by poverty in the region of Durham. The board's poverty action plan, Together for Hope, lays out several measures: for example, enhancing after-school programs and raising awareness of the impact that poverty has on student well-being and school achievement.

Gathering feedback from families affected by poverty is a crucial component of the board's plan to provide a better understanding of what supports are needed and where. Every student deserves the opportunity to achieve excellence, regardless of their background or upbringing.

My congratulations to the Durham Catholic District School Board; the director of education, Anne O'Brien; Janine Bowyer, superintendent of student services and safe schools; and all the other hard-working education workers involved in the development of this ground-breaking plan that will make a substantive difference throughout the region of Durham.

LABOUR DISPUTE

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Today I rise to stand in solidarity with 2,300 brothers and sisters of Unifor Local 444 who have been on strike for nearly a week at Caesars Windsor casino.

I am speaking to this issue today because I have been in Toronto and unable to make it home to visit the picket line. I will join these workers when I return to Windsor. I want them to know that I support them in their fight for a fair deal.

Speaker, making the decision to go on strike is never an easy one. Walking that picket line is a sacrifice. You sacrifice your time and your pay, and families are impacted. We know these workers just want to get back to work, serving casino patrons and making sure that visitors have an amazing experience. They want to get back to work.

I was incredibly touched to see photos of the picket line from yesterday. In honour of the horrific Humboldt Broncos tragedy, workers on the line wore jerseys and carried signs and hockey sticks. It was an amazing display of community spirit and togetherness. So I want to thank our striking 444 members for that incredible gesture and send my sincere support and solidarity for their efforts.

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Mike Colle: I rise today to speak to Holocaust Remembrance Day, Yom ha-Shoah.

Last night, I attended the Yom ha-Shoah community commemoration hosted by the Shaarei Tefillah congregation at the synagogue in my riding. Participating organizations were the Azrieli Foundation, the Associated Hebrew Schools Choir, and the Bialik Hebrew Day School Choir.

There were a number of survivors, Mr. Speaker, who gave testimony to what they had witnessed as young children back in the 1930s and 1940s. They talked about how the Nazis, from 1935 to 1945, slaughtered their brothers, their sisters, their mothers, their grandmothers. They slaughtered and murdered six million human beings who were innocent. They slaughtered them because they were Jewish. They were there to say that this should never happen again. Six million Jews were forced into gas chambers in Auschwitz, Dachau and Bergen-Belsen, beaten to death, executed, or buried alive in these death camps all across Europe. This went on year after year while the rest of the world stood by and did nothing. They did nothing. They knew the slaughters were taking place. Men, women, and children were being slaughtered, and they did nothing. That's what we want to pay tribute to today and remember that.

Mr. Speaker, after, I would like to move unanimous consent for a moment of silence for Yom ha-Shoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Eglinton—Lawrence is seeking unanimous consent to do a moment of silence, which will be done after all of the statements are made. Do we agree? Agreed.

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mrs. Gila Martow: Today, as we heard from the member from Eglinton—Lawrence, is Yom ha-Shoah, which is Holocaust Remembrance Day. We're paying homage and reflecting on what occurred during the Second World War to the Jewish community, the attempted genocide of European Jews. Actually, they wanted to take it across the entire world and spread their message of hate from Nazi Germany.

Decades later, unfortunately, we can't say that anti-Semitism isn't alive and well in the world. We had Chabad Flamingo in my riding of Thornhill, just a couple of weeks ago—a synagogue that had rocks thrown through its front glass doors. And just a couple of weeks ago as well, in France, a Jewish woman, 85 years old, a Holocaust survivor named Mireille Knoll, was stabbed 11 times and killed in her apartment in France.

I see all the children up here in the gallery, and I hope that when they grow up to be adults, we can eradicate hate against all communities, and that we can work together in one of the best provinces in one of the best countries in the world to ensure that a message is spread

far and wide to say “never again,” and to really mean it. Unfortunately, it's not always true, Mr. Speaker.

Next week, we'll be commemorating Yom Hazikaron, to remember those victims of terrorism and the fallen soldiers in Israel fighting for freedom, as well as Israel's Independence Day, Yom Ha'atzmaut, ending on a good note.

JUSTIN JEWELL

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further members' statements? The member from—no, I'm coming full circle. The member from Essex. My mistake.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: That's okay. Thank you very much, Speaker.

I'm honoured to recognize a special and inspiring young man from my hometown of Belle River today. Justin Jewell is a 17-year-old musician who has recently undergone treatment for cancer. What makes Justin's journey so special is that, while overcoming his own health challenges, he's used his gift to help heal other kids facing their own challenges.

We all know the power of music. It can fill your heart; it can heal your soul. But from the mouths of babes, it can heal your body.

Justin began sharing his gift with other children while at the Children's Hospital at the London Health Sciences Centre. The sweet sound of his mandolin or guitar filling the hallways of the hospital could be heard, with his perfect pitch delivering some of the classics from Led Zeppelin and beyond. They were welcome as a respite for other families and for patients who were undergoing treatment.

Justin was joined by his proud parents, Jim and Lorraine, who have helped encourage him to follow his passion since he first took up music.

Speaker, I've had the great opportunity to hear Justin jam, and he is a force of nature. It takes a special kind of person to face your own challenges and yet find the strength to comfort and entertain others.

I'm happy to report that Justin continues to make progress post-treatment, and it won't be long before we see him at the top of the billboard charts making his own music and healing us all through his gift.

Keep rocking, Justin. We are all so very proud of you.

JAMES BARKER BAND

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Today I wish to congratulate the James Barker Band on winning Country Album of the Year at the Juno Awards last month. The four members of the band are James Barker, Taylor Abram, Bobby Martin and Connor Stephen. I'm proud to say that Taylor Abram is from my riding of Barrie.

The James Barker Band was created in 2013, and they got their big break when they won the Emerging Artists Showcase at Boots and Hearts in 2015, earning a record deal with Universal Music Canada.

Last year, they released their first album and became the first group in history to top the charts on Canadian country radio, with a song from their first breakout recording.

In light of these accomplishments, the James Barker Band was nominated for five Canadian Country Music Awards, including Album of the Year, Single of the Year, Video of the Year and Group of the Year. And they were nominated for two Juno Awards: Breakthrough Group of the Year and Country Album of the Year, ultimately winning the prize for Best Album.

I want to once again congratulate the James Barker Band on their Juno win and all their recent accomplishments, as well as to wish them continued success in the future.

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TAMIL COMMUNITY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further members' statements? The member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills. My apologies for my first miss.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Tamil people of Sri Lanka have suffered ongoing persecution since independence in 1948. In 1976, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam were created as a military body to protect the Tamil people. A civil war began in 1983. The Tamil Tigers became a strong and effective fighting force.

In 2006, the Canadian government was persuaded to place a terrorist designation on the Tamil Tigers. This had the effect of marginalizing Tamil people in the eyes of the world.

The civil war ended in 2009; the Tamil Tigers were completely decimated. The Tamil Tigers will never be a fighting force again. The terrorist designation is not needed anymore.

But the terrorist designation still exists. It is like a black cloud hanging over the heads of Tamils in Canada. It stigmatizes them. It prevents them from publicly mourning and remembering their fallen people at their remembrance services each year.

In the interests of restoring respect and dignity to the Tamils in Canada, I ask the government of Canada to remove the terrorist designation from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

Mr. Speaker, I have a motion calling for the removal of the terrorist designation from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, which I will present to the Clerks' desk at this moment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Please feel free.

WELLINGTON ADVERTISER

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Wednesday, April 4 was a great day for the people of Wellington county. That's the day we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Wellington Advertiser. We gathered at the Wellington County

Museum and Archives along with municipal officials, our new senator, Rob Black, our MPs, and the member for Wellington–Halton Hills.

Fifty years is a remarkable achievement in the newspaper business, in a family business or in any business. The Advertiser is more than that. It's an institution and an essential public service. To coincide with the celebration, the archives launched the complete digitization of the Advertiser from its first edition on March 12, 1968, all the way to 2018.

But we now live in a challenging environment for community newspapers. According to the Public Policy Forum, one third of journalism jobs have been lost over the last six years. Last year in Perth–Wellington, we lost newspapers in Stratford and St. Marys.

But there is also a bright side: Despite the difficulties in the industry, many papers are still going strong. The Advertiser, after 50 years, is still going strong. That's good for every community and every citizen they serve. The Advertiser is a local voice, an independent voice and an essential voice.

I'm sure I speak for Ted Arnott and for every MPP of every party when I say congratulations to the Wellington Advertiser, its founder Bill Adsett, publisher Dave Adsett, and everyone at this tremendous paper.

SERVICE DOGS

Mr. Arthur Potts: I rise today to discuss the certification of service dogs, their trainers and their owners.

Service dogs play an important role assisting people with visible and non-visible disabilities. The dogs can be constant companions and help their owners to stay focused, remain calm and complete tasks and alert others if assistance is required. For example, I know of a three-year-old, Keanna, who suffers from severe epilepsy and relies on her service dog to alert her family that a seizure is imminent. Her family refers to their service dog, Jerry, as their "guardian angel."

However, service dogs can only serve their purpose if the dog has been properly well-trained so that the owner has control over the dog. The dog must also demonstrate a high standard of training so that it can be safe in public. Unfortunately, this is not always the case.

In the United States recently, a service dog bit a six-year-old passenger on Southwest Airlines as she walked to her seat. The dog was not provoked; rather, the six-year-old was just walking by. Was this dog a certified dog? What steps did the owner take to prevent this from happening? Airlines need to know that the dogs coming with people have been properly certified and trained so they can be allowed onto a plane. A similar case occurred in Ontario, where someone was asked if they could pet the dog and the owner said, "No, the dog will bite." Well, if a dog is prone to biting, it just really shouldn't be—it clearly wasn't properly trained.

We are having good work done in my community. Toronto Beches Lions is training dogs with the annual car rally. It is also part of the Lions Foundation of

Canada Dog Guides. Last summer, they hosted the Pet Valu dog walk.

As Keanna's parents said, a service dog is a guardian angel. We must ensure that all dogs act the same.

MUSLIM WELFARE CENTRE OF TORONTO

Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: I feel exceedingly happy and very privileged to introduce in this Legislature the Muslim Welfare Centre, whose head office is in my riding.

Mr. Speaker, I am a very proud Christian, and yet my mentor is internationally renowned, the late Major Abbas Ali. He and his wife founded this wonderful organization in 1993. I was elected as a Toronto city councillor in 1991. Therefore, you could say that the Muslim Welfare Centre and I have grown up together in Scarborough.

Major Abbas used to preach, "Service to humanity is service to Allah (God)." The Muslim Welfare Centre has been practicing this slogan for the past 25 years, helping needy people locally, nationally and internationally. Many in the centre call me their ambassador, and I feel very proud.

Time wouldn't allow me to list all the wonderful services this organization provides, so please let me say just a few items here. This year, more than 25,000 people have picked up a weekly food bank package. They have distributed more than 260,000 Meals on Wheels. The Arctic Food Bank in Inuvik serves over 1,200 indigenous families. There is free medical care and international humanitarian relief.

The Muslim Welfare Centre has thousands of dedicated volunteers and very strong supporters for their good cause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Pardon me, Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the member from Scarborough—Rough River. Carry on.

Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm so happy that we're welcoming Shahid Khan, executive director, Muslim Welfare Centre, and Muhammad Rehan, general manager, Muslim Welfare Centre. Welcome to our Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Es salaam aleikum.

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have passed unanimous consent to observe a moment's silence for Holocaust Remembrance Day. I would ask everyone in the place to please rise for a moment of silence.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): God rest their souls.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT ACT, 2018 (TENANT PRIVACY)

LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA LOCATION À USAGE D'HABITATION (DROIT À LA VIE PRIVÉE DES LOCATAIRES)

Mr. Tabuns moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 45, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 with respect to tenant privacy / Projet de loi 45, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation en ce qui concerne le droit à la vie privée des locataires.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: This bill enforces privacy rights for tenants and, in particular, addresses the use of photographs and videotaping of the interior of rented units.

WALK TO WORK DAY ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LE JOUR DE PROMOTION DE LA MARCHÉ POUR SE RENDRE AU TRAVAIL

Mr. Tabuns moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 46, An Act to proclaim Walk to Work Day / Projet de loi 46, Loi proclamant le Jour de promotion de la marche pour se rendre au travail.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The bill proclaims the first Friday in May in each year as Walk to Work Day.

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SCHOOL BOARDS PROPERTY AND DEVELOPMENT TRANSPARENCY ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LA TRANSPARENCE EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES BIENS ET LES IMMOBILISATIONS DES CONSEILS SCOLAIRES

Mr. Colle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 47, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to the transparency of school boards' dealings respecting school sites / Projet de loi 47, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation concernant la transparence des

mesures prises par les conseils scolaires à l'égard des emplacements scolaires.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Mike Colle: If the bill passes, it would require all school boards in the province to notify the public whenever they purchase land or they sell land, or, if they have a development agreement with a developer to develop school property, they would be required to let the public know that they have undertaken such agreements.

PETITIONS

LANDFILL

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads:

"Whereas municipal governments in Ontario do not have the right to approve landfill projects in their communities, but have authority for making decisions on all other types of development including nuclear power and nuclear waste facilities as well as casinos; and

"Whereas this outdated policy allows private landfill operators to consult with local residents and municipal councils, but essentially to ignore them; and

"Whereas the government has proposed through legislation (Bill 139) to grant municipalities additional authority and autonomy to make decisions for their communities; and

"Whereas the recent report from Ontario's Environmental Commissioner has found that Ontario has a garbage problem, particularly from industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) waste generated within the city of Toronto, where diversion rates are as low as 15%; and unless significant efforts are made to increase recycling and diversion rates, a new home for this garbage will need to be found; and

"Whereas rural municipalities across Ontario are quietly being identified and targeted as potential landfill sites; and

"Whereas other communities should not be forced to take another community's waste, as landfills can contaminate local watersheds, diminish air quality, dramatically increase heavy truck traffic on community roads, and reduce the quality of life for local residents;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to formally grant municipalities the authority to approve landfill projects in or adjacent to their communities, prior to June 2018."

I support this petition. I will affix my signature to it and give it to page Faraaz to bring to the table.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further petitions? I recognize the member from Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: "Don't Gamble With Good Jobs. Save Niagara Casinos.

"Niagara casinos were built to bring good jobs to our community. They are now being treated as one more public service to sell off by the provincial government.

"A current request for proposals (RFP) process shows no regard for working people who rely on casino jobs. This RFP has no criteria to ensure job creation"—

Mr. Arthur Potts: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I hear a point of order. I recognize the member from Beaches—East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: A petition has to be addressed to the Legislative Assembly, and I'm not hearing this as a petition. I think it's out of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay, I need to check with the member. Has the petition been certified by the Clerk?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Probably not.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'm going to come back to you. I'm going to turn to the member from Ajax—Pickering. I want to see that petition be certified first.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Joe Dickson: I'm presenting a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

"Update Ontario Fluoridation Legislation.

"Whereas community water fluoridation is a safe, effective and scientifically proven means of preventing dental decay, and is a public health measure endorsed by more than 90 national and international health organizations; and

"Whereas recent experience in such Canadian cities as Dorval, Calgary and Windsor that have removed fluoride from drinking water has shown a dramatic increase in dental decay; and

"Whereas the continued use of fluoride in community drinking water is at risk in Ontario cities representing more than 10% of Ontario's population, including the region of Peel; and

"Whereas the Ontario Legislature has twice voted unanimously in favour of the benefits of community water fluoridation, and the Ontario Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care and Municipal Affairs and Housing urge support for amending the Health Protection and Promotion Act and other applicable legislation to ensure community water fluoridation is mandatory and to remove provisions allowing Ontario municipalities to cease drinking water fluoridation, or fail to start drinking water fluoridation, from the Ontario Municipal Act;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Premier of Ontario direct the Ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Health and Long-Term Care to introduce legislation amending the Health Protection and Promotion Act and make changes to other applicable legislation and regulations to make the

fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario.”

I have signed it, Madam Chair, and I present it to Eric.

CASINOS

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'd like to start over again. I'd like to thank the Clerk for giving me some direction.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the current request for proposals (RFP) by the Minister of Finance regarding the gaming bundle for Casino Niagara and Fallsview Casino Resort is absent of the the following original 1996 RFP criteria to ensure job creation is paramount:

“—to ensure job retention and creation;

“—economic development; and

“—encourage investment;

“Whereas an independent report from HLT Advisory indicated the current RFP could put 1,400 jobs in Casino Niagara and Fallsview Casino Resort at risk;

“Whereas the workers at these casinos have built and continue to build families as well as play an important role in the fabric of our communities;

“Whereas the removal of any jobs from either Casino Niagara or Fallsview Casino Resort would have long-term damaging effects on both the displaced workers and their communities;

“Whereas the people of Niagara deserve to know their government is committed to sustaining and creating good jobs in their communities;

“We, the undersigned, add our names to petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and call on the government, the Premier and the finance minister to:

“—immediately halt the current RFP process concerning Casino Niagara and Fallsview Casino Resort;

“—immediately consult local communities for input;

“—issue a new RFP covering Casino Niagara and Fallsview Casino Resort which includes a guarantee to keep existing good casino jobs in Niagara Falls and uses original 1996 RFP criteria.”

I sign my name to the petition and give it to our page.

LANDFILL

Mrs. Gila Martow: I believe we have the authority to shorten petitions, so I'm going to shorten this petition a little bit. It's a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas municipal governments in Ontario do not have the right to approve landfill projects in their communities, but have authority for making decisions on all other types of development including nuclear power and nuclear waste facilities as well as casinos; and

“Whereas this outdated policy allows private landfill operators to consult with local residents and municipal councils, but essentially to ignore them; and

“Whereas the government has proposed through legislation ... to grant municipalities additional authority and

autonomy to make decisions for their communities; and ...

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to formally grant municipalities the authority to approve landfill projects in or adjacent to their communities, prior to June 2018.”

Of course, I affix my signature and give it to page Sophie.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: “Whereas community water fluoridation is a safe, effective and scientifically proven means of preventing dental decay, and is a public health measure endorsed by more than 90 national and international health organizations; and

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“Whereas recent experience in such Canadian cities as Dorval, Calgary and Windsor that have removed fluoride from drinking water has shown a dramatic increase in dental decay; and

“Whereas the continued use of fluoride in community drinking water is at risk in Ontario cities representing more than 10% of Ontario's population, including the region of Peel; and

“Whereas the Ontario Legislature has twice voted unanimously in favour of the benefits of community water fluoridation, and the Ontario Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care and Municipal Affairs and Housing urge support for amending the Health Protection and Promotion Act and other applicable legislation to ensure community water fluoridation is mandatory and to remove provisions allowing Ontario municipalities to cease drinking water fluoridation, or fail to start drinking water fluoridation, from the Ontario Municipal Act;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Premier of Ontario direct the Ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Health and Long-Term Care to introduce legislation amending the Health Protection and Promotion Act and make changes to other applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario.”

I agree with this petition, affix my name to it and send it down with page Rowan.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the government promised to balance the budget, but the province is headed for at least six more years of deficit;

“Whereas interest on the debt is costing Ontarians more than \$1 billion a month;

“Whereas an ever-increasing debt crowds out the ability to pay for the services and investments that Ontarians rely on;

"Whereas life is harder under 15 years' rule by the current government and that in order to pay for their last-ditch promises they will have no choice but to raise taxes on Ontario families;

"Whereas it is clear that this government will do, say, or promise anything to cling to power;

"We ... petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To call on the government to stop making last-ditch promises before a general election in a desperate attempt to save their political fortunes."

I agree with this petition and will pass it off to page Dwight.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas an undisclosed number of Canadian consumers' personal information was hacked in the recent Equifax breach; and

"Whereas impacted person(s)' credit ratings are affected by breaches of this nature, which has repercussions for impacted person(s)' day-to-day living; and

"Whereas breached data of this nature includes names, addresses and social insurance numbers; and

"Whereas the number of impacted person(s) cannot be confirmed; and

"Whereas there is no mandatory requirement for private sector entities in Ontario or other Canadian provinces to report a potential and/or actual privacy breach; and

"Whereas government must prevent future security breaches and access to critical consumer information; and

"Where government must enhance consumer protection in Ontario, which effectively builds consumer confidence;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario enact Bill 167, An Act to amend the Consumer Reporting Act, to mandate that consumer reporting agencies respond to consumer inquiry no later than two business days after receiving the inquiry; provide a copy of the person's consumer report free of charge; and that a consumer may request that a consumer reporting agency place a notice of security free on the consumer's file."

I'm signing this petition and will give it to Ekroop.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas older Ontario drivers and those recovering from certain medical conditions are currently forced to undergo functional assessment procedures in order to see their driving privileges reinstated; and

"Whereas the fee for functional assessment services can be over \$800, far beyond the budget of a fixed-income household; and

"Whereas functional assessment services for residents of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry are delivered in Ottawa or Smiths Falls, over one-and-a-half-hour's drive away; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Transportation should focus on ensuring Ontarians can access mandatory testing services locally; and

"Whereas rural residents need prompt, efficient local service for driver licence examinations and reinstatements in order to fulfill daily necessities such as working, buying groceries and attending medical appointments;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) To work proactively with health providers located in the united counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry to guarantee the delivery of functional assessment services within their jurisdiction; and

"(2) To cover functional assessment services under the Ontario Health Insurance Program."

I agree with this and will pass it to page Faraaz.

RESPIRE CARE

Mr. Han Dong: I have a petition from the Flexible Options Network to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas we are concerned about the elimination of respite care from the core suite of services in the EarlyON Child and Family Centres, and the undue hardship this will cause for families who rely on this service;

"Whereas too many Ontarians who have children do not have access to part-time/flexible/short-term or respite care in their communities; and

"Whereas the Ontario government is rolling out the Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework so that 'families can have access to programs better suited to their needs';

"Whereas families in Ontario said that 'they wanted more; more responsive hours of care that meet the demands of modern life';

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to sustain and fund respite/flexible child care under the banner of EarlyON Child and Family Centres as a viable option for families and their children."

I agree with the petition. I'll sign it and give it to page Joseph.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I have a petition that reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas residents who depend on the vital services provided at West Lincoln Memorial Hospital have raised millions of dollars and fulfilled their part of the commitment to redevelop the hospital;

"Whereas health care officials, doctors, nurses, hospital employees and the community at large are expecting the government of Ontario to honour its promise and commitment to redevelop the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital;

"I/we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario Legislative Assembly fully restore the funding committed to the redevelopment project of the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital in Grimsby, Ontario, which was cancelled in the 2012 budget."

I fully support this petition. I affix my signature to it and pass it along to page Will.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

HOME CARE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT (DAN'S LAW), 2018

LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES SERVICES DE SOINS À DOMICILE ET LES SERVICES COMMUNAUTAIRES (LOI DAN)

Mrs. Gretzky moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 5, An Act to amend the Home Care and Community Services Act, 1994 in respect of funded services for new residents / Projet de loi 5, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1994 sur les services de soins à domicile et les services communautaires en ce qui concerne les services financés pour les nouveaux résidents.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It is my pleasure to rise to speak to my private member's bill, the Home Care and Community Services Amendment Act, 2018, or, as we refer to it in Windsor, Dan's Law. It was named after a gentleman from Windsor who worked at the GM plant until it closed, and then he had to leave Ontario and leave his daughters behind. Dan and his wife moved to Alberta so that he could find work.

Before I really get into Dan's story, I just want to talk about how we ended up here. This is not the first time that we have debated this bill. In 2016, we went through this exact same process. It had all-party support, and it was sent to committee for consideration. It sat in that committee for 16 months.

I think it's important to point out, as a doctor who supports the bill pointed out to me, that the Chair of the committee that I sent it to, the justice committee, is a doctor. The medical community is not certain how a fellow doctor, someone who has sworn an oath to take

care of people in this province, has not pushed to get this bill called to his own committee.

1340

It sat in committee for 16 months, and then the government prorogued. It's important to note that the government also holds a majority on every committee, so they could have called the bill at committee any time they wanted. But they chose to prorogue, which means every piece of legislation put forward, whether by the government or any of the members of this House—they were all wiped clean, and we all had to start over again. This is why we are where we are today.

Back to Dan Duma: Dan worked at GM, as I pointed out, until GM closed. He had to leave Windsor to go out west to work. He left his two adult daughters behind, and his wife moved with him. While Dan was living in Fort McMurray, he found out that he had liver cancer. After he received his diagnosis of liver cancer, the wildfires went through Fort McMurray. Dan was in hospital for treatment, and he wasn't able to go home because his house was in the area where there were fires. They ended up having to evacuate all the patients out of the hospital in Fort McMurray and send them to Edmonton.

Dan's wife had to live in a hotel—not near the hospital, because there were many patients who had been transferred, so it was difficult for her to get a hotel near the hospital.

While Dan was in hospital, he was told that he was not going to survive his illness, and that he basically had two options, because he couldn't go back to his own home because of the fires. He could either go to the hotel and die in the hotel, or he could return to Windsor, his hometown, and be with his daughters and his wife.

Dan and his wife, thinking what just about every Canadian thinks—I know I thought it, until I found out what happened to Dan. What most Canadians think is that we have a truly universal health care system, and that if you are Canadian and you live in one of our provinces or territories, it doesn't matter where you are when you fall ill. You will get the medical treatment you need, and you won't have to mortgage your house or mortgage your children's futures in order to get that care. Unfortunately, that isn't accurate.

Dan came to Windsor, and they found out that if Dan went into hospital in Windsor and received care there, everything that he needed would be provided for him in his final days. All the medical professionals, all the medication, any of the equipment, anything that Dan needed medically in his final days would be provided to him, and his family wouldn't have to shoulder the financial burden. If suddenly Dan's health turned or he had some other symptoms, he would have been able to go to the doctor's office and find out what was going on. That would have been covered as well.

But as everybody in this room knows, and as the government says time and time again, most people do not want to die in hospital. That is not where they want to be. And the government has acknowledged that the cost of somebody being in hospital is much, much more expen-

sive than if they're able to go home or, if need be, if they go into hospice.

Yet we have this red tape that financially prohibits people from coming back to Ontario, or if they are from another province and they have loved ones who have relocated here, it prevents them from coming to Ontario to be with those family members in their final days, because they do not qualify for home care. It's not deemed medically necessary under the interprovincial billing model that we have now, so they would have to pay for everything.

Dan's family would have had to pay for everything if he was to die at home with his family. He also didn't qualify for care in hospice. That also would have been a cost to his family, if he even qualified to get into the hospice. He would have been responsible for his medication. He would have been responsible for all of the equipment. He would have been responsible for the bills for all of the medical professionals who would have been taking care of him.

It's truly unfortunate that after hearing Dan's story—and with all-party support—16 months later, we're back here starting this again.

In that time, I have had other doctors come forward and share their stories about their patients, but first I'm going to start with Dr. Nadia Alam.

Dr. Nadia Alam is the president-elect of the Ontario Medical Association. She joined me for a press conference today, and I'm just going to share some of her comments.

She said, "Our humanity is defined not just by the way we treat the living, the sick, the needy, but also by the way we care for the dying. Dan's Law is about end-of-life care and how government rules can make all the difference in the world in providing good end-of-life care or bad end-of-life care."

Then she went on to say, "Any of us here today could be Dan Duma.

"This is where the story becomes surreal. Nobody—not Dan, not his wife, Ana, not his daughters, Laura and Andrea, not even his palliative care doctor, Dr. Darren Cargill—nobody could have guessed that Dan Duma would be denied palliative home care. Nobody guessed that he would be denied something as simple as PSWs or nursing support to help with his care, his bathing, his clothing, his mobility, caregiver relief for his family.

"The reason why he was denied? Bureaucratic red tape. The rule is, to qualify for OHIP coverage of all basic services, a person has to have lived in Ontario for three months straight. In-hospital care is covered, but palliative home care, not so much. Here's the thing: Dan did not have three months more to live. He had terminal cancer and lived just about a month before passing away. Dan was denied his final wish: to die at home.

"Think about it: There is no compassionate exemption to this bureaucratic rule for terminal patients who have only weeks to live.

"Our humanity is defined by how we treat the dying. No doubt the government failed Dan. But there are other

men and women stuck in the same nightmare all over Ontario. We can do something for them. We should do something for them. Dr. Lisa Fischer cares for one such patient in Ottawa."

I'm going to share the story she sent me about her patient. Dr. Fischer said, "My patient moved to Ontario from Alberta to be supported by his family after receiving devastating health news. I feel, as his palliative care physician, that I am delivering care below the current standard as, without access to OHIP and community care, I can't best manage his symptoms while at home. Additionally, he is not eligible for supports in the home such as a personal support worker, home nursing, physio and occupational therapy. These are all key factors to ensure maximum comfort and symptom management outside of hospitalization. Lastly, without OHIP coverage, he is not eligible to access hospice services should and when the time comes.

"This gentleman is at high risk of ending up admitted to the acute care hospital, which is exactly what [he] and his family are trying to avoid.

"The three-month wait period to access OHIP services is a huge barrier that is affecting very vulnerable Canadians at an extremely difficult point in their lives. Sadly for some, they don't have three months to wait."

I think that's a pretty strong statement. We are not talking about somebody who is going to come here with a chronic illness and could survive for years; we are talking about people who are coming here with very serious health issues, people who are returning to Ontario or coming to Ontario for the first time because they have family here and they know that when the end of their life comes, they want to be at home or in a hospice, surrounded by their loved ones. I don't think anybody in this room would want to deny somebody that. At some point, this could be any one of us in this room. We could have a family member from another province who wants to come back and be with us in their final days. Currently that is not possible unless they have the financial means to do that.

I think it's important to note, in the little bit of time I have left, some of the organizations, some of the professionals that have signed on and supported this bill. These are medical professionals, people who work either directly with patients or indirectly in the hospital system or home care system. I have Dr. Shawn Whatley, who is the current president of the Ontario Medical Association, and, as I said, I was joined by Dr. Nadia Alam, who is the president-elect of the OMA; Dr. Darren Cargill, who is the medical director of the Hospice of Windsor and Essex County, the doctor who came to me about Dan and has really been such an incredible support in not only drafting the legislation but bringing awareness to the issue and bringing in some of these other professionals to realize that there is legislation here that could help their patients; Marnee Wilson, the president of the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario; Sharon Baxter, executive director of the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association; Vicki McKenna, president, Ontario Nurses' Association;

Dr. David Henderson, president, Canadian Society of Palliative Care Physicians; Dr. Laurent Marcoux, MD, MSc, president, Canadian Medical Association; Fred Hahn, president of CUPE Ontario; and Shirlee Sharkey, president and CEO of St. Elizabeth Health Care.

1350

When we started this bill down this path in November 2016, I had four, maybe five organizations that had signed on. In the 16 months that this sat waiting for the government to do something with it, that list—and this was just a short list that I read—has doubled or tripled in size. They need to pass this legislation before we rise for the election.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. John Fraser: I very much appreciate the opportunity to speak to this bill. I want to thank the member from Windsor West for bringing forward Dan's Law for debate again. I'd like to acknowledge her advocacy and passion for this issue.

I would also like to thank the Duma family for their advocacy and for sharing their family story. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Darren Cargill for his advocacy on this issue and other issues related to palliative care.

As the member from Windsor West would know, I met with her and Dr. Cargill on this issue several months ago. We talk about it with some regularity. I know they both know, and I want to assure them again, that I'm committed to resolving this issue.

As the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health, I've had the mandate to develop a comprehensive strategy for palliative and end-of-life care in our province. It's a mandate that I asked for and one that I've had for the past four years.

My commitment to access to quality end-of-life palliative care stems from my family's own experience. In October 2013, my father was diagnosed with an inoperable oral cancer. He was told by his oncologist he would receive three palliative radiations so that he could spend his final few months being able to eat and have less pain. He also told him somebody—this was on a Wednesday—would call him Friday to schedule those treatments right away. Friday came and nobody called. Next Friday came and, despite repeated calls, nobody called. That got resolved.

Then he finished his palliative radiations, so my sister called his care coordinator to access more support in the home. It was three weeks before Christmas. The response from the care coordinator was, "I'm retiring, and you will have a new case coordinator in January." When you have only months to live, two or three weeks is a very long time; I know that.

This morning I read the story as well of Professor Paul Adams and his wife, Suzanne—they lived in Ottawa—and their journey. Suzanne had metastatic breast cancer. It's a story that everybody should read, from July of last year.

I was reminded of how they moved through our hospitals and our health care providers and did not get a

palliative care assessment until her final days, when she arrived in the emergency room. There should have been a safe path for them earlier on their journey. I believe that, in the face of suffering, we all have an obligation to get people on a safe path. That is what we have been focused on, providing access by creating pathways to care.

As part of our plan, we are providing 200 new hospice beds across the province. We've increased operating funding to hospices and visiting home hospice. We've supported the development of advanced care planning initiatives, volunteer training and caregiver support.

We've invested in perinatal hospice at Roger Neilson House and Emily's House. If nobody knows what perinatal hospice is, it's when you get a life-limiting diagnosis in utero and the doctor says to you, "Your baby is at great risk and you have a choice to make." Often what happens is, you have a choice to make and then there is no support. This is something that's in this year's budget that I'm very proud of.

We have increased training opportunities to support health care workers in long-term care to better deliver palliative care. We've implemented a new capital program providing \$200,000 per bed to offset the cost of hospice construction.

We have also created the Ontario Palliative Care Network to advance the provision of quality palliative care in the province. At the core of their strategy is access. Better access is the most important thing we can do. Although the number of people who come to this province to join their family before they die is very small, it is an issue of access and it is important.

Home care should be part of the Canada Health Act. Home care is such a large part of provincial health care services that it should be guaranteed nationally in law. We should have portability and reciprocity.

Unfortunately, we can't wait for that to happen, and that brings us back to the experience of Dan's family. There were efforts by Dr. Cargill and others to help the family care for their father. Those efforts gave support to the family, and the reality is that much more could have and should have been done for them. We must do better.

Again, I believe that in the face of suffering and human need, we all have an obligation to get people onto a safe path. We need to address that gap that exists and deal with what's in front of us in real time, right now.

As a member, I have been faced with similar situations. It is possible to find solutions in the community to support families. The member from Windsor West read a letter, and I want to assure her I'm working with that family and that physician to find a solution. It's not always easy and usually requires the participation of a number of community leaders. I have found that working with community-based partners like hospices, community health centres, community services, visiting home hospice, regional pain and symptom management teams and palliative care regional teams, you can put together a solution. They have the flexibility that is needed. I find there is always goodwill in the community to get this done.

One of the key things I've discovered about hospice palliative care across this province is that communities have taken their capacities, used them in different ways and achieved the same outcome. So the hallmark of palliative care is collaboration. Having said this, in these situations it is always a big effort that requires a number of people to engage to get that safe path established.

It would be easier if the pathways were the same for everyone, and until we find a permanent solution, I want to let any member of this Legislature know that if you are confronted with a situation like Dan's family, I am at your disposal to help you and your community and that family find a solution.

As the member from Windsor West would know, I fully support the intent of Dan's Law. I do believe it may be the best approach to take a regulatory approach, and I think we can fully achieve the intent of what you would like to do and what we all need to do together.

I want the member from Windsor West, Dan's family and everyone to know that we've been working to develop a permanent solution so that families like Dan's in the future will have a safe path to support them at their most vulnerable time. To that end, I know that the Minister of Health intends on bringing forward this issue to cabinet next week.

There's still work to be done to get this over the finish line. I want you to know I'm fully committed to getting this done. I want to thank the member from Windsor West again for providing another opportunity to debate this bill, and I look forward to working with her and all members of this Legislature to ensure that families, at a time when they are most vulnerable and in their greatest need, have all the support they need.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

1400

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to join the debate on Bill 5, the Home Care and Community Services Amendment Act.

Coming from the context of someone who, prior to becoming an MPP—at the region of Durham, I chaired the health and social services committee for several years and was the president for two years of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies of Ontario.

As the member from Windsor West pointed out, under interprovincial billing agreements, if someone comes to Ontario from out of province, they have to wait three months before being eligible for OHIP. In that time, the other province is responsible for covering medically necessary visits. Access to physician and hospital services is covered, but the gap lies when patients need home care. In my view, Bill 5, as proposed, effectively bridges this gap in home care and community services, like palliative care, by eliminating this wait time.

When we last debated this particular bill, which was November 17, 2016, I had the opportunity to speak on that bill and supported it, because the bill at that time put patients first, counter to the government's choice to focus home care funding in bureaucracy rather than in front-line home care services.

According to the Auditor General of Ontario's September 23, 2015, report titled *Community Care Access Centres—Financial Operations and Service Delivery*, the Auditor General found that 39% of the funds allocated for home care by the government are funnelled into bureaucracy rather than front-line care, resulting in less care, like palliative care, being provided to the Ontarians, like Dan, who need it most.

Lao-tzu, the Chinese philosopher, once said that life and death are one thread—the same line viewed from different sides. I've long been guided by the belief that how we care for each other at the end of life is as important as the beginning of our lives. Palliative care focuses on living, not dying.

Individuals are empowered to choose how they navigate their final journeys, and their families receive the necessary support in preparing for their loved one's last stages of life. Eliminating the three-month waiting period will allow many to choose the route of their final journey.

What happens at the end of someone's life often results in a very powerful memory, either a positive memory or a negative memory, of how that person lived and also how the health care system served that person.

What is clear is that there's no medical justification to require a three-month waiting period.

Sadly, many Canadians who are returning to Ontario, like Dan or others, to spend time with their families cannot afford to wait three months for home care and community services.

Removing the three-month waiting period is in line with what Ontarians expect of our universal health care system. This will necessitate a greater focus on home care, and health care more broadly, as evidence has shown that, when properly supported, home care services often result in higher patient and caregiver satisfaction, particularly with end-of-life care.

The proposed bill under consideration would ensure that Ontario's health care system provides care for all by truly putting patients first and removing an unnecessary barrier to accessing home care and community services.

In conclusion, Ontarians want and deserve a health care system that helps them live independently at home, where we know they want to be. That's why I'll be supporting this proposed bill today.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Good afternoon, Speaker. I'm encouraged to hear the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Health say she will take this issue to cabinet next week. I say, from his lips to God's ear.

I want to put on the record a letter published last week in the *Windsor Star*. In her concluding remarks, my friend from Windsor West listed a distinguished medical panel of people who support this law. They are the people who wrote this letter to the *Windsor Star*. I want to say that they wanted it on the record. They wrote: "As the organizations representing over 100,000 health professionals we want to express our support for Dan's Law—Bill 5—and ask that you join us in this support."

"The bill was the joint effort of MPP Lisa Gretzky (NDP—Windsor West) and Dr. Darren Cargill, a Windsor-based palliative care doctor. Dan's Law would provide much needed support for patients and their families. The bill seeks to remove the three-month waiting period for access to OHIP-funded palliative care and home care for Canadian residents who move to or return to Ontario....

"The issue came to light for Dr. Cargill, when a patient of his, Dan Duma, was denied home care services upon returning to Ontario from Alberta. Dan was dying of cancer with a life expectancy of less than three months. Dan's Law would prevent future patients, families and caregivers from experiencing unnecessary hardship....

"As health care professionals we know that there is no medical justification for the wait period and believe that, especially in these circumstances, we should afford Canadians and permanent residents the right to die with dignity. The benefits of home and palliative care are not only medical—they serve to support family members and caregivers.

"The benefits of timely care include avoiding potential medical complications of delayed care and the associated significant human and financial costs arising from these complications.

"It is imperative that all three parties work together to ensure Dan's Law is passed into law before the provincial election."

Speaker, those are the words of highly trained, dedicated, caring and concerned Canadians who deal first-hand with other Canadians who get caught up in the red tape that this bill seeks to address.

I want to congratulate my friend the member from Windsor West for her passionate support of this piece of legislation.

Sometimes I just wish that we all could see the positive, non-partisan aspects of some of our private members' bills. Dan's Law makes sense. It made sense before the Legislature was prorogued. It makes even more sense now, because if we don't pass it before the election, many months will pass before Ms. Gretzky can reintroduce Dan's Law again, and who knows by then how many people across Ontario will get caught up in the red tape which this bill seeks to eliminate and die under circumstances that don't allow them to die with the dignity we all deserve?

This isn't a scam. No one is trying to jump the queue here. It's a common-sense medical approach that all provinces should adopt.

Speaker, there's no place like home—be that in the home of your parents or other family or your hometown hospice. In our final hours on this earth, may we all find the peace and comfort and care from dedicated professionals, without the stress and tension that Dan Duma's family had to go through. A home isn't just a place where you live or have lived; it's also a place where you find comfort, where you can feel safe, and where you can be cherished. Is that too much to ask from a government? I think not; I hope not.

Once again, I thank the member from Windsor West and Dr. Darren Cargill from my local hospice for crafting this great bill for our consideration. I encourage all members to support it this afternoon.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise today and to speak on Bill 5 put forward by the NDP member from Windsor West. Basically, today we're talking about home care and community services—to amend the act so that we can provide end-of-life care, palliative care, home care, whatever is needed, without a waiting period. Right now, if you move from province to province in Canada, you are subjected to a three-month waiting list to get OHIP and to get home care. Emergency services are covered. I think it's problematic—and I'm a little surprised that nobody has addressed it today. The fact is, we're all Canadians and we have a national medicare system, as we used to call it. People are quite shocked, when they go to another province, that they're covered for emergency care, but sometimes when they want to get other care for whatever reason—they've gone to help a daughter, maybe, who has had a child and they've relocated to another province for months—they have this three-month waiting list in order to receive any kind of health care and support and home care.

I think that discussion has to take place between all of the provinces. Yes, Ontario should be at the forefront, and we all support this, and we all support ending the fact that people have to wait three months to get home care and palliative care, which is what we're focusing on today, but we should be having that discussion with the other provinces, because otherwise we could create an imbalance whereby people are coming to Ontario and receiving care that may not be accessible or permissible in another province, which makes it unfair.

1410

I think we all remember a few years ago—we were all quite shocked. A woman had to be transported by air ambulance, I believe in Alberta. I think she was on some type of vacation. She had to be transported and she got a bill for \$10,000 for an air ambulance. She was an Ontario resident, a Canadian citizen, and she got stuck with this incredible bill, because apparently you are not covered for air ambulance services for an emergency. This was an emergency medical situation in another province, and people learned to their surprise that they're expected to get some kind of health travel insurance in order to go to other provinces to get this type of service covered.

Maybe it's our fault as legislators that we're not getting the word out to our communities. Maybe it's understood by Canadians that they expect to be covered in other provinces for emergency services, home care services and palliative care services. Maybe we need to have that discussion with our federal counterpart and ensure.

One of my constituents, Emma Kaplan, actually told me recently that she hoped we were supporting this bill, because she had a situation where her grandmother was a

palliative patient and would have benefited from this type of legislation. The grandmother came to Ontario to be with her family, and had to receive end-of-life care in a hospital because it wouldn't be provided at home. Unfortunately, we see this all too often, Madam Speaker: People find out the hard way how the rules are and how the rules are applied.

I think the term that was used previously was "compassionate exemptions," and I think that we have huge bureaucracies, but it's up to us to ensure there are methods to appeal, to receive compassionate exemptions in a quick and timely manner, so the rules can be applied maybe more fairly and maybe with a little bit of wiggle room that's needed.

I really hope to see this bill get moving along, and I think we heard a little bit from the government side that they're having a cabinet meeting soon to maybe just enact this legislation and not wait for it to go to committee and third reading.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I'm looking forward to celebrating with my colleagues.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: First I just want to commend the member from Windsor West for staying the course. This is a very personal story. She has demonstrated great resiliency, patience and determination in trying to get this legislation passed.

Of course, the reason that we are here again is because of the prorogation. I know that the member from Welland had this spot, and she felt so strongly as well that this particular issue would come to the fore and we would have another chance to hold this government's feet to the fire and ensure that Dan Duma's story was actually told in this Legislature.

I think people are just genuinely surprised to discover that this situation exists in the province of Ontario, that if you are in another province, you are a Canadian and you come back from working abroad, you have to wait this three-month waiting period for this particular service. This means that they can access a physician in hospital care, but not qualify for home or community care. This is obviously the health care gap that exists, and it has existed and we've known about it for quite some time.

But what makes this more personal, obviously, and emotional, is that there's a human connection. I think that when private members' bills and legislation are driven by those human stories, they are all the more powerful. That has been my personal experience, and I think that most members in this House would agree.

The fact that this motion is before us again is another opportunity for the government to acknowledge that this is a gap. We just heard the parliamentary assistant say that with this new health minister—because the last time this came forward, it was a different health minister, and that conversation was ongoing. But we've just heard, for the first time, I believe, that this issue will be brought to cabinet next week.

We have three more weeks of this Legislature in advance of the election. It's getting down to the wire. If

there were any issues that this government could take action on, I think it would be this one, because in Ontario, this government, quite honestly, Madam Speaker, is sort of desperate for a good-news story. So let's get it done, right?

The other issue, of course, is that as the former finance critic I always look at the money. The health care system and the state of our hospitals is obviously in a crisis. We have brought these stories to this government day in and day out now for almost the entire term.

The fact of the matter is that to be able to offer the opportunity for somebody to die in a hospital, at almost 10 times the cost, versus a compassionate home care situation where integrity is maintained and where people can spend time with their family and their loved ones—those broader principles and goals that have been part of a national conversation on dying with dignity can be honoured. So the member from Windsor West has brought forward this motion. We're incredibly proud of the motion and of the work she has done on behalf of these families. We all have families in our ridings who fall under this category as well. I'm really hopeful that whatever happens at that cabinet meeting, it results in Dan's Law passing and being incorporated going forward.

This is an opportunity to do something good. It has all-partisan support. Let's get it done, to honour Dan Duma, but also to get the work done that we need to do.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to speak to Bill 5, the Home Care and Community Services Amendment Act (Dan's Law), 2018. I'm pleased to support this, particularly in my role as critic of long-term care, seniors and accessibility.

It aims to remove the three-month waiting rule for grievously suffering and terminally ill patients who need end-of-life or palliative care. In other words, this bill would allow palliative care patients who move to Ontario, or return after residing in another Canadian province, to have some dignity and peace in their last days by giving them access to home care. It would also bring OHIP rules in line with universal health care.

Under the current OHIP rules, new residents can be admitted to hospital for medical care but they cannot access home care or a bed in a hospice. Despite the fact there's no medical or financial justification for the waiting period, they are still required to wait three months for coverage, even if they have just one month to live. This is exactly what happened to Dan Duma, whose egregious case has prompted this amendment.

Duma, a former Windsor autoworker, died fighting for the right to receive home care in his final days. He was refused home care services because he had spent some time outside his home province of Ontario. Dan left Windsor in 2013 for Alberta to find work after GM's Windsor transmission plant closed. Tragically, while there he was diagnosed with liver cancer and was told he had only a month to live. Like most of us would want,

Duma himself wanted to get back home to Windsor, to be in a familiar environment and spend his last days with his family and friends and see everybody he wanted to one last time.

But upon return to Ontario there was no comfort to be found. Duma was told by our health bureaucracy he did not qualify for any home care supports until he was in Ontario for at least three months—this despite the fact he had just one month to live.

Madam Speaker, it is a shame this bill hasn't been passed into law even though it was introduced here two years ago. The Liberal government unfortunately made the political decision to prorogue the Legislature, which means Dan's Law, in the words of his palliative care doctor, Dr. Darren Cargill, "has remained in purgatory ever since." That quote is in reference to the Liberal government's move to first let this critical bill languish in committee for 16 months before wiping it off the books after prorogation.

We don't believe any person facing a terminal illness should be subject to waiting for end-of-life care. Canadians deserve timely access to health care. That's what we call universal health care. That's what we expect. That's what we deserve. This is an egregious policy. It's health care rationing. It's causing unnecessary suffering and it's uncaring.

It does not even make sense from a financial standpoint. Think of it: An acute care bed costs an average of \$1,000 a day compared to \$250 to \$350 a day for care in a hospice centre. This bill is an opportunity to make better use of acute care beds at a time when hospitals are over capacity and to provide the comfort the person is requiring. Giving families support to care for a loved one at home costs the province between \$150 and \$250 a day.

The change is supported by patients, their families and the medical community, including the Ontario Medical Association and Ontario Nurses' Association.

I urge the Liberal government to stop their hollow election promises and pass this amendment. If they truly want better care for the people of Ontario, this is one way that they can stand up and show it. After all, does this government not support care for people? Do they not support timely access to care for people who are suffering? Do they not support end-of-life care, Madam Speaker? In Duma's case, the government put bureaucracy above caring and left a dying man without care at his most critical time. If this government sincerely cared about people, they would stop hiding behind election slogans such as "A Time for Care" and they would swiftly pass this law, because Dan Duma did not deserve to die without care, nor did his family deserve the anguish and trauma of watching their loved one suffer.

1420

Bill 5 would ensure that access to care for the terminally ill is equitable, no matter the nature of their grievous illness and no matter where they live.

Madam Speaker, I hope that everyone in this House will pass it today and ensure that no one else has to suffer without the care they deserve.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Wayne Gates: It's a pleasure to rise today and speak to the private member's bill put forward by the member from Windsor West. I believe that this is a critically important piece of legislation that identifies a glaring hole in our health care system and does the necessary work to fix the hole.

Dan Duma, the Windsor resident whom the bill is named after, found himself in a really tough situation. After the General Motors plant closed in Windsor, Dan and his wife left Ontario for Alberta so Dan could go work in Fort McMurray. What was tough about this story that nobody has really talked about is that Dan worked in Local 1973 at the CAW transmission plant. Here's a guy who was a hard worker—worked in a plant most of his life—and he had to make a decision, because there was no more plant in Windsor. He made the decision to make sure he could provide for his family, and moved out to Alberta. The sad part was, he left his two daughters behind. It's not an easy thing to do later in your life.

As we've heard from other speakers, they run the risk of slipping into this terrible gap if they have to return home. Once Dan was diagnosed with liver cancer, he and his wife returned to Windsor to be with his daughters, only to learn that palliative care needs would not be met by the province for a full three months. You have to ask yourself why.

Here's the part that I find interesting about this: Dan lived in Ontario. He paid taxes in Ontario from the General Motors plant. Through no fault of his own, the plant closed. A hard-working guy from Ontario moved out west. You would think, because he paid into our system all these years, that when he came back and needed that system to assist him, it would be picked up. What we found out was, it wasn't.

I haven't talked to his daughters, but I'm sure that the last thing they were expecting when their father went to follow the work was that he'd be coming home to die and that when the decision was made that he wanted to die at home, the system would fail him.

We spend a great deal of time in this Legislature speaking about issues in the province's universal public health care system. What I've noticed time and time again is that this universal system doesn't always seem to be truly universal. It surely wasn't universal in the case of Dan. There are gaps when someone can't afford their prescription medication. We can't continue to boast about a world-class health system if we continually run into these gaps for the people in our communities.

The worst part is that Dan is not the only person who experienced this gap in care in the province of Ontario. The member from Windsor West just said in her press conference this morning that she has been contacted by two doctors this week with patients going through the exact same thing.

I will say to the Liberal Party—because I'm not going to be able to get through my entire speech—that you've had a chance to do this for 16 months. You have the full

support of all three parties. We are asking you: Pass Dan's Law before we rise on May 9.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Arthur Potts: In the little time I have left on our side, I want to reinforce our government's support—certainly my support—for the bill brought forward by the member from Windsor West. It's absolutely critical.

I've been learning about the three-month gap—I wasn't aware of it before I became a member in this Legislature—and responding to constituency concerns that when you change residency, you have this period of waiting.

I would have thought as a matter of common sense that if I was moving to BC from Ontario, Ontario would pick up the balance at a level that respects the universal health care that we expect to have across the province of Ontario. To learn that it doesn't, particularly where there are extraordinary circumstances in end-of-life care, is really extraordinarily troubling. I'm delighted to reinforce what I've heard from the parliamentary assistant: that our government is taking a very serious look at this.

We've also heard people raise the issue of end-of-life care and hospice care. I want you to know that I take hospice opportunities, and I'm trying and working very hard with my community so that we can build an east-end hospice.

When I was in university, in my third year, I wrote a significant paper on hospice care and end-of-life treatments, and interviewed workers in hospices and at Salvation Army Grace Hospital at Bloor and Church to get a better sense of the emotional demands, particularly on those hard-working people who work in those environments.

We're working with Rauni, who heads up Emily's House in Toronto-Danforth. She and Mary-Margaret McMahon, who is the local city councillor in the south of my riding, are trying to identify a location.

I'm pleased that in our budget we've announced more supports, because under our previous allotment, all the hospice care beds for the east part of Toronto and that LHIN had already been spoken for. There was no immediate funding so we could move forward with the project.

We have a number of very significant financial donors who are prepared to put money into assisting in this and developing—working with the Philip Aziz Centre, for instance, and their extended network of high-worth earners who want to give back to the community in certain ways.

I'm very encouraged and I'm pleased and I'm delighted to see this bill, because we have to close this hole. Just this week, Speaker, I had a constituent concerned because her parent came from another country. She's a new Canadian, and she's here; she is a Canadian, lives in Ontario, has OHIP. Her mother came without the proper travel insurance. I wonder if we need to do something at the federal level—that people need to demonstrate that they have insurance. Her mother came into my community, got very ill, ended up in the intensive care unit at Michael Garron Hospital and, unfortunately, didn't sur-

vive. As a result, as the family was collecting her remains, they were presented with a bill for in excess of \$50,000, which they can't pay.

We need to ensure that people are covered off, whether it's for provincial travel or international travel. We need to do a better job.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from Windsor West to wrap up.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I only have two minutes to wrap up, but I did want to recognize the member from Ottawa South, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health, and the work that he has been doing. I know he has fielded some phone calls and some emails from people across the province—not just health care professionals, but from many people across the province—as I have, who are very supportive of Dan's Law.

I also want to thank the member from Welland, my colleague from Welland, who gave me her private member's bill slot. I would not have made it before the election, to be able to debate this bill again, and she gave me her time slot so that I could do this.

I also want to mention that the importance of this bill is highlighted, not just because the OMA has come out and written a letter and signed off on a letter, or the president-elect came to a press conference. They have an election platform that they put out. They have a document that they put out, prior to the upcoming June election, with their list of priorities of what they want to see from the government, and Dan's Law is within the first two pages of the OMA's platform of what they expect from the government. I think that speaks volumes to their commitment as medical professionals, recognizing that they are the ones who have to tell these people that they cannot provide the care that they need and deserve, when they can't give them the home care or they can't put them into hospice.

Dr. Cargill went above and beyond. He doesn't mind me sharing this: He snuck Dan into hospice, and he treated him at no cost. All Dan's family had to pay was for the medication.

That should never happen. Our professionals should never be put in a position where they feel that they have to be working and providing these services for free. They shouldn't be in a position where they feel that their government is not supporting them while they are trying to support people here in the province.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will be voting on this item at the end of private members' public business.

1430

YOUTH POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR L'ENGAGEMENT POLITIQUE DES JEUNES

Mr. Potts moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill 38, An Act to amend the Election Act with respect to voter eligibility / Projet de loi 38, Loi modifiant la Loi

électorale en ce qui concerne l'admissibilité des électeurs.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Arthur Potts: It is an absolute delight for me to have an opportunity, now that we've prorogued and I ended up getting another ballot spot myself, to have a chance to debate this bill.

The intention of this bill you can get very clearly from the short title: It's the Youth Political Engagement Act. It stems, Speaker, from some interactions I have had with the youth leadership in my riding, who participated with youth leadership across the province in various opportunities. This is the genesis, and I'm happy to have a chance to speak to it here today.

Of course, Speaker, this comes in a long line of bills that I've had the pleasure of introducing in the House since I was first elected in 2014. I have had a little bit of success trying to find those important niche areas, a lot associated with consumer protection issues. You'll be familiar, of course, with the tipping bill, Speaker, that required that owners of organizations where tips were being utilized couldn't skim them, steal money from their employees. Of course, I will acknowledge that it was a bill that introduced by my previous colleague at Beaches—East York a number of times. It was a commitment I made to the community that if I were lucky enough to get elected, I would bring that bill back. He had four opportunities to bring it forward and to not have it pass; I brought it forward in my first year and we did get it passed. I'm delighted that we were able to do that.

We also had a bill that I brought forward relating to daycare wait-list fees, non-accountable wait-list fees. That also came as a result of listening to consumers in my riding and hearing the concerns they were having about daycares charging a wait-list fee that was not accountable, that was non-refundable. We rectified that. I brought the bill in and worked with the ministry. We brought in the regulatory changes needed.

Of course, the very exciting one that I did in 2016 was the Air Miles bill. As you know, with Air Miles, as they were planning to expire on December 31, 2016, we brought this bill and we actually convinced them, based on one province—one subnational jurisdiction in North America—not to do that, and they didn't. As a result, consumers saved tens of millions of dollars in Air Miles points. I was delighted to be able to move that forward.

Then, this morning, Speaker, you had the pleasure of listening to me in a somewhat impromptu debate we had around having consumer protection agencies and the new openness that we're bringing to people getting their credit scores.

This is not a consumer protection bill as such, but it very much is a participation. It very much is a bill which seeks to address, I think, a developing need in our community. When I first brought the bill in in the last session, I acknowledge that I didn't anticipate it to be even getting to second reading because I didn't have a ballot

spot. I anticipated to just open a discussion about whether 16-year-olds should have the right to vote.

I'm delighted with the support that I have received across the province towards having this bill go forward. There has been some pushback on the other side, and I want to have a chance in my opening remarks to discuss some of those issues that were raised. But I do want to give a particular shout-out to some of the youth in my community—Charlotte Zronik, who was the president of my youth Liberal association, a Malvern student who is now in university; Noor Samiei, who currently is the president of my youth organization; Chris Knipe and Roya Shidfar—all who have done great work and are participating in politics at a young age and getting engaged in the community.

They came to me in January and they said, "We're so involved in politics. We know the issues and so many of these issues affect us. They affect us in a personal way about our futures." Whether it's the cost of going to university, whether it's the cost associated with climate change, the increasing cost of housing and education, these bills fundamentally affect them; and they asked me why it was that they didn't have a chance to participate.

I thought that was a good question. So as I said earlier, it was my intention to just bring the bill forward so we could have a debate. We're coming into an election. I don't expect this to get past the government House leaders at this stage and be adopted as a private member's bill in this session, and I'm actually okay with that. But I think it's important that we take the issue back into our communities and listen to what people have to say about it.

What I found particularly interesting, particularly amongst the naysayers, is that there is this attitude that youth aren't mature enough. I would like to address that question of maturity head-on. There isn't a maturity test for voting. Without being too hard on some of the people who have been extraordinarily hostile in the kinds of pushback they have had on this bill, as I see on a whole bunch of issues, where people are not being civil, where people are being nasty and angry and lashing out—if we had a maturity test, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of people who have the vote now who probably shouldn't be voting, if that were the basis of it.

Interjection.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I wouldn't put the minister into that category, of course.

Speaker, it concerns me that some of the naysayers have such a negative and such a vitriolic reaction to this notion. I wonder: In some cases, are these the parents of teenagers? We all know that when kids hit that critical area where the hormones are starting to just go a little snaky, parents have a really difficult time with it, whether it's from keeping their rooms clean, doing the dishes, doing their chores, just coming home when they're just acting out. We know teenagers. I'm wondering if maybe all of this is negative reflective action from parents towards their teenagers. They don't think that they're responsible enough to vote.

I kind of get that. But what I have experienced amongst the youth in my community is that those who want to be engaged in a positive way are doing so, and they are acting responsible. I don't expect every child who hits 16 or every young adult who hits 16 or 17 to go off and participate, but I think it would be important as part of their growing up and part of the educational curriculum if you could have them brought into a program so they would better understand the issues and better understand the possibilities. And while they're still at home, their parents can assist them in getting on the voters list, going to the polling station and sorting out the mechanics of it, because once a young adult has left the house and they're into university or college in another city, it becomes a lot more complicated. It's not something they're used to. I think it would help establish a habit of voting and of voting whenever they could.

I know that this has worked in my lifetime. My father, Speaker, as you know, was very active in politics when he first ran in 1963 for the Liberal Party of Ontario. He ran again in 1967. In my first campaigning, I was six years old, knocking in signs for my dad. My father used to take us to the polling station. I have six brothers and sisters, so you can imagine the little train we had. He'd take us because he wanted to reinforce that this is an incredible responsibility we have to cast a vote. People all over the world wish they could do the same. He would reinforce that with me.

I brought that same attitude to my children. My daughter Robin, my older daughter: I used to bring her into the booth with me. My younger daughter, Dara: I used to bring her right into the voting booth. Sometimes, Speaker, I would ask her, "Who do you think you want to vote for?" If she was starting to vote for the wrong person, I would subtly adjust her to the member that I wanted to—

Hon. David Zimmer: Interference.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Interference, yes, but I was actually reflecting my will and not theirs.

I've had tremendous support across the province. I'm delighted to say that we have in the visitors' east gallery right now Scott Watson, who's here on behalf of UNICEF Canada. I want to welcome Scott here. Scott has sent me a very supportive note.

As you know, UNICEF has as its slogan "For Every Child." Scott and I had a conversation earlier. He wrote too: "On behalf of UNICEF Canada, I wanted to commend you on the introduction of legislation to decrease the voting age in Ontario. We are certainly in strong support of this bill." I appreciate that. I know that UNICEF works with children all over the world. As Scott has indicated to me, the presumption of listening and of a child's having opinions that count is embodied in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It's embodied. It's article 12, and I'd like to read into the record article 12 of the convention, Speaker. Article 12 says that children "have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously."

That doesn't mean, in a sense, to give them the vote, but it means that their opinions count. I look at those

young adults in Florida who have fundamentally changed the tone of the gun debate in the United States of America. Retailers are changing what they're doing because these kids, who don't have the right to vote, have done the protests and have brought attention to the issue, #NeverAgain. They have empowered the nation to work on the National Rifle Association in order to stop the proliferation of, particularly, automatic weapons that are used in these situations.

Speaker, one of the debates I have not heard and one of the arguments which I would be really interested to hear—and maybe members can chip in in the debate today. If at 16 you do have the right to vote, would you have the right to stand for election at 16? Maybe one might think that they're mature enough to vote, but would you want them standing in the Legislature next to you and having to take time out to go back to high school? I don't know. It's an interesting part of the debate. Maybe there's a difference between the eligibility criteria for standing for election and for having a vote in an election.

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Speaker, we give more responsibility to our youth today than we probably ever have. They are more engaged, both in social media and information technology.

At 16, they can drive a car, although they have to be chaperoned for a while by another driver.

We also know they can fight in wars. My father volunteered as a boy soldier. He lied about his age to get into the service.

We also know kids are out there working. As workers, they are paying taxes. As consumers, they are paying taxes. It is a fundamental principle of our democracy that you don't have taxation without representation.

So I think there are a lot of really positive reasons why we should be moving forward on a bill—at least having that conversation, having a discussion.

I like to reflect on what I was doing at 16.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: We don't have time for that.

Mr. Arthur Potts: We have time, but I won't get into some of the conversation we had earlier.

Actually, at 15, I was president of the Rosedale young Liberals' association. At 16 and 17, in 1974, I was driving the family van around and collecting people, driving them to polling stations, in an election that Donald S. Macdonald, the federal member at the time, won by something like 250 votes. I had the highest return of Liberal voters in that poll because I was out there on the street with a car and getting people to the polls who might not have otherwise gone. So at 17, I know I had a huge influence in the outcome of that election, and I think all 16-year-olds should as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Madam Speaker, we're having such a lively time here this afternoon, and now we're debating Bill 38, An Act to amend the Election Act—well, there's election fever in the air here, so it makes sense that we would be debating this.

Basically, what the member from Beaches–East York is proposing is that we lower the voting age in Ontario to 16. I guess some people are going to be watching at home and saying, “Well, why not 15, why not 14?” All I can say is that I do interact—we all do—with a lot of youth. We have youth volunteering with us, and we’re seeing them on a fairly daily basis these days when we’re getting ready for an election. As the PC critic for children, youth and families, I’m interacting with youth in sometimes very difficult situations, and oftentimes they have to grow up way too young.

I want to just talk a little bit about the motives. The member opposite had a media availability to present the bill, and he was joined not by youth advocates from all parties, but just from the Liberal Party. That makes sense; he’s a Liberal member. I’m just curious what the youth associations from the other two parties have to say about this. I’ve heard pros and cons from youth in my riding. Obviously, I would be interested to know if there was some kind of political motivation. We all know that when we look at the demographics of polling, the younger demographics tend to vote differently than the older demographics. We saw that in Scotland when they had a referendum in 2014. They allowed 16-year-olds to vote in the referendum.

Maybe that is something that needs to be considered here. Maybe we want to pre-register our youth to vote when they turn 16. In order to vote on certain referendums, maybe we could have a few things on a type of electronic ballot, an online survey—pre-registered to vote, and then you can vote in some type of referendum. Maybe that could be a first step and we could see the results. We could see how many youth are really that engaged and interested and how they vote. Maybe there could even be comment sections. That is something I would like to see us work on fairly soon. That would be quite interesting for all of us, and I think we could get all three parties to support an initiative like that.

I know that Quebec Premier Pauline Marois was suggesting lowering the voting age in Quebec. Again, she’s not with the Conservative Party—not that there is one exactly there, but there are more conservative-leaning politicians in Quebec, and she’s more liberal.

I think that this is really about youth engagement. I would honestly support any effort that we can come up with to encourage our youth to be more engaged. I think that, as parents—many of us are parents, and we remember what our teenagers were like. We would have loved for our teenagers to be involved in community organizations and to be volunteering. We all saw that the schools really did help in finding things for the kids to do for their community service hours. We weren’t able to be partisan with those in-school volunteering things, but the kids do get community service hours. I know that I’m not the only one who signs for youth in my community—the high school students—to come out and volunteer. I know I’m not the only one in this Legislature who goes door-knocking with high school students and finds that, a lot of times, they know the issues and they know how to

speak to people very well and collect the information in a very organized fashion, oftentimes better than the adults who go door-knocking with us. Certainly, we know—the member opposite mentioned a maturity test—that there are many youth who would score a lot better on that maturity test than adults.

In our party, we have the member for Niagara West–Glanbrook, who is the youngest ever elected to the Legislature, at 19. He’s going to be speaking after me, and I think we’re all going to be very interested in hearing what he has to say about this initiative.

We heard the member from Beaches–East York mention that we don’t have taxation without representation. I think that’s part of the crux of why people are against this. Should you be voting while you’re still in high school? We assume that people who are 18—they may be in post-secondary education, but they may also be working and paying their taxes. But 16-year-olds who are working at a full-time job and paying taxes are few and far between. Yes, they’re working part-time, and they’re filing their income tax if they are—and I would encourage that maybe that should be part of this, that we should encourage more of our youth to be filing income taxes and starting to think about putting whatever savings they have in tax-free savings accounts or RRSPs. By doing so, as the member opposite said, we’re getting them in the habit of voting.

I think that there’s a lot of wiggle room here. I think that we’re going to be hearing, obviously, from all three parties here, but we’re going to be hearing, hopefully, from community members once they get wind, in the press or media, about this bill. We’re going to be hearing from them as well.

I hope that we can steer the conversation towards how to get people to pre-register to vote—our youth—and how to get our youth engaged and aware. Maybe it’s something that will help revive some of our media as well and give them some support, if the youth are a little bit more engaged in following what’s going on in the media and in politics, instead of just getting their news from social media.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the member opposite for bringing forward this interesting bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I’m very pleased to be able to join the debate this afternoon on Bill 38, the election amendment act, which would lower the minimum age for voting in Ontario from 18 to 16. I’m very much in support of this bill and thank the member from Beaches–East York for bringing it forward.

I know that there are some naysayers out there; I’ve heard from a few. They’re very concerned that there are lots of 16- and 17-year-olds who don’t pay any attention to politics, so why would you let them vote? It’s probably true that there are lots of 16- and 17-year-olds who don’t pay attention to politics. Quite frankly, in 30 years of knocking on doors, I’ve discovered that there are a lot of

26-year-olds and a lot of 36-year-olds, 46-year-olds, 56-year-olds, 66-year-olds, 76-year-olds and even 86-year-olds who don't pay much attention to politics, so I see that as a red herring. That's not a qualification for voting right now: that you have to pay attention.

But what I would like to talk about is some of the young people I've met who are 16 and 17 years old and who do pay attention to politics.

Speaker, you know what a wonderful job our young trustees do, our student trustees, in representing their fellow students on the school boards across the province. Those students came to us when I was president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association and said, "We'd like to have a provincial trustees' association, just like the adult trustees," and they actually took the initiative to set up a provincial student trustees' association.

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Then, if you're Minister of Education, you have a body called the Minister's Student Advisory Council, MSAC. Wonderful young people—tremendous diversity—all over the province apply to be on MSAC and come together to give the Minister of Education advice. Those are people who are highly involved.

If I think about my own riding in Guelph, three out of the seven high schools hold all-candidate debates, and I never, ever miss those. The truth of the matter is, the quality of the questions you get from the 16- and 17-year-olds—because they're focused on grade 11 and 12 students, who are 16 and 17 years old—the quality of the questions, I can tell you, Madam Speaker, are just as good as at any debate which is populated by and aimed at adults. So, given the opportunity, those 16- and 17-year-olds can really focus.

At another high school in Guelph, I've got a civics teacher who, annually, when she's got her grade 10 civics class—one of the assignments is that they have to find a current issue, they have to research the issue and they have to write a letter to a local politician advocating for whatever they've learned about that issue. We get amazingly interesting letters from this particular grade 10 civics class each year, which we take great delight in responding to. Again, it's a group of average, everyday young people who are actually interested in politics and can articulate what they're doing.

What's the point here? Well, to me, the point is that we have all sorts of information that tells us that people who vote once are more likely to vote again in the future. The best predictor of future voting is past voting. What an opportunity we have to start young people voting while they're still in high school, when we can organize some education about the process.

We actually have is a model to do that. There's something called Student Vote Canada, which is active in many schools across Canada and which organizes the infrastructure to teach students about elections, about researching candidates, and about researching platforms. They do a mock vote. They have a secret ballot. Incidentally, the vote from Student Vote Canada is more accurate than the polls, don't you know. When they

unseal the ballot boxes and reveal how the students voted, they're always more accurate than the polls on the outcome. I think that with a bit of a message, we could use that as an opportunity to get our young people engaged in voting while they're still in high school.

Thank you—a wonderful bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It's a pleasure to contribute to a very unique debate this afternoon, one that I didn't have the opportunity to add my thoughts to the last time it came around but one I'm very pleased to stand and spend a little bit of time hypothesizing about. It's fair to say that this is a bill that should go forward, at least to be examined in committee, where we need to do more studies to see what this looks like in other jurisdictions as well.

I also want to thank the member for Beaches—East York for his commitment to advocating for youth. I think it's fair to say that he is indeed young at heart, and perhaps in person as well—I was careful with my phraseology there.

What we're talking about today is reducing the voting age to 16 years of age. I was elected, as members in this House will know, at 19 years of age—actually, very shortly after my 19th birthday, so almost 18. Perhaps you might think I was one to avidly advocate for the reduction of the voting age. I want to just say that I think we have to be a little bit careful. We have to do our due diligence. As someone who worked in federal politics on the electoral reform committee and looked at some of the different methods of voting when it comes to mixed-member proportional representation or other methods of voting, we always have to make sure we're not rushing into these sorts of decisions hastily, that we're doing our very best to examine all the options.

That being said, I think there is definitely a pro to this idea. We've heard already in this House about some of the lack of engagement among younger voters, and we've heard about some of the concerns that have been expressed about how we can send our young people off as soldiers and can expect young people who are 16 to get married with their parents' permission, and yet we're not willing to let them contribute in democracy to the extent that they can cast their ballots.

I understand where this comes from, but a lot of this, again, is sort of anecdotal at best and perhaps just hypothesis at worst. We need to make sure that we're actually looking at some of the metrics behind this and looking at some of the results in other jurisdictions.

As well, what I want to do just briefly is to ask people in this Legislature to do a little bit of research into public choice theory. Public choice theory is, you could argue, one of the bases for our democracy. When we think about public choice theory, I like to use the analogy of the cow example, where if you have a cow and you have 1,000 people who decide to guess the weight of this cow, if you take the aggregate of that 1,000 people and divide it, you actually have the opportunity—

Interjections.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I'm not saying that there's any bull on the other side; I'm just saying that in the aggregate, this choice often comes very, very close to the actual weight of the cow. That's the beauty of public choice theory, the basis for a lot of our understanding of the democratic process.

One of the things we have to look at in this process, though, is the trade-offs that are inherent in our electoral system. Everyone in this House has spent some time campaigning, and you hear from people all the time who say, "Well, you know, I don't need to vote. My vote doesn't matter anyway," or, "This riding has always been Conservative, so why would I bother coming out?" They might or might not have been voting Conservative—

Interjection.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Or Liberal, in the case of the member from St. Catharines' riding, which as we know he has done a good job of representing for the last 40 years—and Niagara in general, I should say.

But I think that we have to really look at what it is that we can do to help remove some of these barriers for youth in that 18-to-24 age bracket. I know this is a little old, but in the 2011 federal election, there was only a 38.8% turnout among people ages 18 to 24. So what should we be doing to increase voter interaction at that level? Having more people engaged—it doesn't automatically follow that if you reduce the voting age, those people are going to get the opportunity to come out and vote.

I think we'll also have to look at the fact that just as we're willing to let our young people join the military with their parents' permission at 16 and get married at 16, we'll also have to look at the reverse: You're not able to buy a pack of cigarettes at age 16; you're not able to buy a case of beer. Again, this is, I think, a good decision. We don't want young people engaging in those types of risky behaviours.

But when you look at the aggregate weight of casting that ballot, have those at that age thought through all the implications of their ballot in a way that we can understand? I know other members have said that they believe that is so. Again, I'm not passing ultimate judgment; I just think that these are questions that need to be answered. We need to be looking at the opportunity costs of casting their ballot and whether or not we can be doing more to reduce that opportunity cost, whether that's through online voting or other measures.

I think there's a broader discussion that needs to be had about the role of youth within the political process. Quite frankly, I was attacked quite hard during my political run for this seat in the Legislature by those from various parties who spoke a lot about experience and their particular backgrounds without talking a lot about what the future would look like for Niagarans and what people were looking for—

Mr. James J. Bradley: Tony Quirk?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Well, not only in the nomination stage; the Liberal candidate was more than happy to tread over my limited experience as well.

I think there's a broader discussion that has to be had. I look forward to supporting it and seeing it go to committee, and I look forward to the discussion that will be had there as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate? I recognize the member from Kitchener-Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Quite honestly—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: The youthful member.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yes, the youthful member. That's good. I like that.

Quite honestly, I welcome any opportunity to talk about ways that we can strengthen our democracy and improve participation in our democracy, because it genuinely is an issue that I'm concerned about. Voter turnout has been quite poor and on the decline. Even an enraged electorate is sometimes not that engaged in the electoral process. We've seen that.

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I was listening to the member from Beaches-East York as he was talking about one of the reasons why he connected the child care wait-list issue from consumers in his riding—I prefer to call them citizens; they're not really consumers. He heard from those people, and then he petitioned his own government to get rid of the child care wait-list fee. Well, there should never have been a child care wait-list fee in the province of Ontario, but it is an important example in some respects as to how the voices of the citizens that we're elected to serve can actually inform policy. When they do speak up, there's a responsibility that we, as members, have to actually bring forward their concerns, sometimes even when we don't agree entirely with them. But if it's in the best interests of the people of the province, then we actually have a responsibility. So there is a two-way street.

The question, though, for the member from Beaches-East York, is—he was vague on the fact that—would he actually vote to have 16-year-olds have the vote? He said that there's a lot of back-and-forth and there are lot of pros and cons out there, so I'm not really quite sure where he stands on that.

I do believe very strongly that 16-year-olds have a lot to contribute to democratic institutions, be they school boards or city councils or provincial Legislatures or federal Legislatures. I think that, genuinely, 16-year-olds are hungry to be involved. When they see the systems that are working against them, be it really high tuition or transit that doesn't work for them, or the cycling issue that I've brought to this Legislature around vulnerable road users and strengthening the rights of those people, like pedestrians and cyclists, to have better recourse and more meaningful consequences for serious injuries or deaths—when an issue connects them to the institutions that really dictate their lives. When I go to speak at high schools, I tell them, "Everything is political; it really is, from the water that you drink to the air you that breathe to the roads that you walk on." So I encourage their participation, because their participation can be incredibly meaningful.

Like the member from Guelph, I was president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. I have a deep respect for the student trustees in the province of Ontario. In many instances, their questions at the boardroom table resonated with the lived experience of the students we were serving and so had great weight. Those questions were informed because they were living out and experiencing the educational policy that we were determining at that board table. That's an important part of a democratic process.

It's really interesting to hear the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook talk about his involvement with electoral reform, because electoral reform is one of those indicators and one of those measures that we could actually have taken in the province of Ontario back in 2007 to improve the democratic institutions such as this by having a mixed-member proportional election process where people don't always have to choose a Liberal or Conservative or New Democrat—perhaps a Green candidate. That was really a missed opportunity.

He seems to be also in agreement with the Prime Minister, who promised electoral reform: that the last election was the last first-past-the-post. But then once he got back into power, he decided, "No, we have to slow things down. We don't want to rush into this." This is the problem with power: Once you have it, the human instinct—and, actually, patterns will demonstrate that—is to hold on to that power. That power imbalance is very much part of this debate, with youth and engagement and voting.

I have to say that our civics curriculum could be a better curriculum. If I had greater confidence in the civics curriculum in the province of Ontario, I have to tell you, I would feel very confident that the voting practices and the voting engagement of 16-year-olds would be done in a very responsible manner. That's saying something, because my husband is a very, very good civics teacher in Waterloo-Oxford, and he challenges his colleagues across the entire board to make sure that that curriculum is current and it's up to date. If you have the same civics curriculum and you're delivering it every single year and it's the same and never changes, then you are doing a great disservice, I think, to the students who are in that classroom. I think the civics curriculum in the province of Ontario could be better. It can be stronger. That's an important part, I think, of this debate.

In summary, it is time for this decision to be made. The politics at play here, though, are obviously—we have three more weeks of the Legislature. Private members' bills rarely go anywhere, much to our chagrin on this side of the House. I think that an important distinction to be made will be that giving the vote to those who are under 18 will only be useful if it is part of a larger non-partisan effort to address democrat engagement at all ages. That's something, quite honestly, that we should all be invested in.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Deborah Matthews: I'm delighted to join in on this debate today. I want to start by applauding the

member from Beaches—East York. This is exactly the kind of issue that should come forward as a private member's bill. It allows us to have the conversation and, hopefully, spark a larger debate. I can tell you that I am enthusiastically, wholeheartedly supportive of this.

I guess the question I ask is: Why not? Why would we not want more people involved in our democratic process? I was kind of stunned when I heard the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook say that maybe, when people are between the ages 16 and 18, they're not able to weigh the importance of their vote. Well, I tell you, I think I know lots of people between 16 and 18 who have a lot more competence, a lot more knowledge and a lot more vision than many people 18 and over. I don't think at age 18 you automatically gain that competence. So I would say: Let's encourage more people to get engaged.

The biggest reason I support this is because it means that students would be able to cast their first vote when they are in high school. It means those civics classes take on a real sense of importance because people will make decisions while they are in that school year. So I completely support it.

I think also we have to remember that younger people have more at stake in the decisions that we make than we do. The environmental concerns are something that—younger people are going to have to live with the consequences of our decisions for a lot longer than we are.

We are so proud that we've introduced free tuition for almost a quarter of a million Ontario students. I have a feeling that if 16- to 18-year-olds had the vote, that might have been an issue that was discussed a long time ago.

I think of high-speed rail running between Windsor and Toronto. That is something that will have real consequences for the younger generation, and I think that if they would support that, that would become more of an issue that politicians would have to address.

I am fully in support of this. I look forward to wholehearted support. I'm a bit concerned by what I'm hearing across the way from the Conservative Party: that they're going to vote to let it go forward, but they don't really think it's a good idea. And, hence, they're raising concerns about it.

I'm all for it. Let's do it. The sooner, the better.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: It's such a great opportunity to rise in the House this afternoon to speak on the bill being proposed by the member from Beaches—East York. I want to start off by commending my great colleague here for putting this bill forward. This piece of legislation, Bill 38, amends the Election Act to lower the age for persons to be eligible to vote in an election to the Legislative Assembly from 18 years to 16 years.

I rose in the House yesterday to talk about my involvement with the Girls' Government program that I'm running out of my constituency office. Over the past three years of running this program, I've had the express privilege to witness first-hand just how politically engaged our young people truly are. These are young

girls in grades 7 and 8, from ages 12 to 14 years old. They care about and are attuned to their community issues and certainly have opinions on them that they want to express. Not only are they attuned to the issues in their community issues and certainly have opinions on them that they want to express—not only are they attuned to the issues in their community, Madam Speaker, but in communities around the world.

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One of the exercises we did as a Girls' Government group was to debate an issue. The topic for our debate was whether the voting age in Ontario should in fact be lowered to 16 years old from 18 years old.

At the time, the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida had just happened, and the students there had just challenged senators and congressional representatives and engaged them in a substantive debate on gun control.

What was going on south of the border, and the #NeverAgain movement, became a core element of these young girls' debate in my constituency office. Let me tell you how impressed I was to hear 12- and 13-year-old girls speak about gun control, the importance of the issues and the importance of what was going on south of the border.

This is all for the simple reason that the issues in our communities affect young people directly. A number of the government's most recent policies are impacting youth as primary stakeholders. If people aged 16 can drive, work, pay taxes, join the military and make their own choices about medical treatment, they should also be allowed to vote. Young people have a stake in the game, and it's time for us to respect that.

We demand more from our youth than ever before, expect more from them in their studies, and give them more responsibilities to fulfill. Every day, young women and men aged 16 coach sports, referee, tutor, teach, care for children, serve food, work as security, farm, build and contribute to the province and its well-being. It is young people who deserve most to decide on how we take action on the various issues that we debate in this very House, as they have the most at stake.

This bill is about the lives of people who are impacted by policies on which they do not have a voice and who will have to live with the consequences of these actions. We need to provide young people with a direct and democratic channel for making their views heard. For this reason, I am proud to support this bill and hope all colleagues in this House will do so.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm really pleased to have a couple of minutes to add my thoughts to this debate.

As one of the younger members in the House—I'm 40 years old; I think that's below the average age of the House, so I think I can speak with some degree of authority on this—I can recall, thanks to my parents being involved in the political system for a long time, being just five years old and going to political rallies and confer-

ences and such. It certainly moulded me into the partisan that I am today, and the activist. I'm very proud of having had that experience. I think it's an important part of civics, and civic engagement, for youth to be involved.

In fact, when I give some thought to this bill, I reflect on our own party structure. Of course, we all have youth wings of our parties, and those youth, whatever the parameters are of their involvement—if there is a threshold of 16, or at least 15, or down to 14—we involve them. It's important. They contribute enormously. I was honoured to be a New Democratic youth as a youth, whatever that age was. It seems like forever.

But we also, as partisan youth, got to vote on partisan policy. In a sense, we were shaping the party's policies. I know that sometimes, there was some heated debate where the youth wing of the parties overturned motions that were on the floor, just by engaging and organizing and mobilizing. That's an important lesson to learn.

Let's bring it right now to the reality of this bill, to give the franchise to those youth who are interested in being engaged, are already engaged, or don't know how to be engaged. I think this is a great first step forward.

Also, as now an elected official—and previous to being an elected official, in my three failed attempts to win an elected seat federally, prior to winning provincially—I embarked on a campaign to engage with local youth in my riding of Essex.

I will never forget, and am eternally grateful to, my good friend Tania Petro, who is a teacher at Pavillon des Jeunes school in Belle River. Tania was the first teacher—she was teaching grade 5 at the time—to invite me to her class as a candidate—a failed candidate at that—to come and talk about my experience in trying, through the election, and to teach the kids about what I knew about civic engagement and politics.

Since that time, I've done, I would say, dozens of different schools and classes—the grade 5 and grade 10 classes—and I have never heard such insightful commentary and ideas than from those youth. Why is that? Perhaps, Speaker, it's because they're not tainted by partisanship. They are altruistic. They are focused on the big picture. They are focused on achievables. They don't get into the dirty business of having to please one sector or another, the nastiness that we all know exists in politics. They are focused on solutions.

I think that that could breed so much more optimism and a better system overall that this is certainly a worthy endeavour and a worthy policy for us to look at. I commend the member for bringing it forward, because I'm certain that in the schools that he has toured through in his tenure as a member, he has heard that time and time again.

What I always did was that I would split the class up, representative of the mixture of the House here. We would have a mock debate and would decide which policy we wanted to debate. Inevitably, it would be lowering the age of voting. It was always a great debate with lots of wonderful ideas. Of course, there are some youth who might be apprehensive about that for whatever

reason, but the majority of the time the vote always came out on the side of allowing those 16 or older—or whatever the parameters were that that class may have put in—to be part of the process, to be engaged and, ultimately, to cast their ballot for the future of this province.

I think it's something that is worthwhile for this Legislature to look at. I support the member's position, and I will support the bill as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Hon. David Zimmer: I want to make one point in response to the member for Thornhill's comments on this bill. She said that she thought there was a political motivation behind this bill, and she pointed out that there are studies that show that younger people tend to vote Liberal rather than Conservative. On the basis of that, she seems to be opposing this bill.

I would say that the real question that she should be asking is, "Why don't young people tend to vote for Conservatives?" Obviously, they're doing something wrong. That's what she should be turning her minute to. This is not a partisan bill. If young people tend to vote Liberal, we're doing something right. So there you go.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from Beaches–East York to wrap up.

Mr. Arthur Potts: It is a pleasure to wrap up. I want to thank all the members of the House who had a chance to contribute to the debate today.

The member from Thornhill: The minister quite clearly said to her what I was hoping to say to her, so I will bypass that, but she also talked about whether there would be undue influence from teachers and such. You know what? Parents, spouses—we all influence people and how they vote, and that's part of the nature of the debate.

I also appreciate very much the words from the member from Guelph. She talked about high school debates and how articulate those students are. I did a little discussion with grades 5 and 6 at Kimberley Junior Public School in my riding, and I was just astounded at how pointed, excellent and au courant the questions were that I was getting from these kids.

The member from Niagara West–Glanbrook called me young at heart. I really, really appreciate it, and particularly from that member, because he acquits himself so well in this House, with such maturity, that we often think that he's an old, old man. He's so good at what he does. He is old way beyond his years, and I commend him for how articulate he can be.

The member from Kitchener–Waterloo reluctantly acknowledged the importance of these bills and how I brought them forward. But that's okay. It's clear. I want you to know that I'm absolutely clear. Like the member from London North Centre, I totally, completely and absolutely support the right of 16-year-olds to have the vote. That's why I'm doing this. We need to hear what other people's points of view are, and that's really important. I hope we get a lot of that as part of the debate.

The member from Davenport: I want to commend her for the excellent work she continues to do with young people in her riding—

Hon. Michael Coteau: What about Zimmer?

Hon. David Zimmer: What about me?

Mr. Arthur Potts: Well, if he's going to walk out of the House before I get to him, he'd better sit in his seat. He might want to raise a point of objection.

But the member from Davenport has a very excellent way that she's able to work with young people and to experience it first-hand.

The member from Essex: Thank you very much. You're young way beyond your years as well; I wish you would be younger in the knees, so you could come out and play hockey with us once in a while with the Legiskaters. I'm looking forward to that and taking the puck from you as you try to go around me on the defence. He's raising issues about how youth have shaped policies and the policies of the party. I think that's wonderful.

1520

But the minister encapsulated it all by saying, "Why don't young people like Tories?" Because they don't look after their best interests.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. We will vote on this item at the end of private members' public business.

LIABILITY FOR CLIMATE-RELATED HARMS ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LA RESPONSABILITÉ À L'ÉGARD DES DOMMAGES LIÉS AU CLIMAT

Mr. Tabuns moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 21, An Act respecting civil liability for climate-related harms / Projet de loi 21, Loi concernant la responsabilité civile à l'égard des dommages liés au climat.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate the opportunity to present the arguments for my bill, the Liability for Climate-Related Harms Act, 2018. This bill simplifies the process of suing fossil fuel companies for the cost of damage from their operations and their products. The bill makes it more likely that governments, businesses and individuals will be able to secure compensation for costs to prevent such damage.

Typically, in this House, when we debate climate change, we talk about the need to reduce emissions to avoid damage in future. That really is the critical starting point. I think that we are entirely right to talk about mitigation, about reducing our emissions. We know that if we don't slow down and stop climate change, then we'll see ever-escalating damage from extreme storms, floods, wildfires and rising seas.

We're seeing damage now, which we have to pay for. We're going to have to invest a lot to protect ourselves, our homes and our cities. The stakes are very high. We're not talking about the far future.

Let me just note some of the costs that people in Ontario are already encountering. We can start with Windsor. In 2016, the Windsor Star reported that on Thursday, September 29, record rainfall hit Windsor-Essex county and resulted in a declared state of emergency in both Windsor and Tecumseh. It's estimated that the insured loss reached as much as \$108 million, with no telling how much damage was not covered by insurance. That was September 2016.

Then, in 2017, August 28 to 29, rains brought major flooding to Windsor, Tecumseh and other parts of Essex county. The Windsor airport broke a rainfall record. Over 1,000 basements were reported flooded, and water levels were waist-high in some areas. The Insurance Bureau of Canada reported that a significant flooding event in Windsor resulted in more than \$124 million in insured damage.

In just two years, Windsor got hit with over \$200 million in flood damage, in both years from record rainfall.

It's not just insurance companies that will be called on to help people in trouble. Canadian Underwriter put out an article about our good colleague from Windsor-Tecumseh, Percy Hatfield. They headlined it, "Windsor Residents 'Disappointed' with Ontario Government Response After August Flooding: NDP."

September 22: "During question period at Queen's Park," Minister "Mauro was asked Thursday by Percy Hatfield, the New Democratic Party municipal affairs critic, when the government will 'update the coverage guidelines'" for disaster recovery assistance, "'especially for those who can no longer qualify for private insurance.'"

A lot of people are not going to be able to qualify for private insurance against flooding in the future.

The head of underwriting for Swiss Re in Canada was quoted in that same article saying, "Flood insurance continues to remain either not available or unaffordable for Canadian property owners in areas with high flood exposure." Swiss Re found that "9% of Canadian homes are located in a 100-year flood zone and can be considered at risk for severe flooding."

Not only are insured claims rising, but there will be a lot of people who can't get coverage at all. Governments will either have to step in to help people, or eventually people are going to have to move out of those areas because they're no longer habitable. That will be incredibly expensive as well. We are not going to abandon those people. We're not going to say, "Tough luck. Too bad." No. We're going to say, "The climate has changed. You are our neighbours. You are our fellow citizens. We're going to assist you." It is going to be pricey.

I'm just going to leave Windsor with this: 2016, 2017, February 2018—again, flooding in Windsor from record-breaking rainfall over the long weekend. What's common in all three years is that the rainfalls were record, and

they simply overwhelmed the storm sewer system that was set up for another climate—one that's gone, no longer here. We're in a different world. That's Windsor.

Toronto: CTV reported on July 8, 2013: "A severe storm in Toronto flooded parts of the city, knocked out power to thousands, and shut down roads and sections of the city's subway system Monday, as nearly 100 millimetres of water fell across the area in a matter of hours."

At the storm's height, Toronto Hydro reported 300,000 people without power. People had to be rescued from a GO train trapped by flood waters in the Don Valley. According to Environment Canada, total rainfall surpassed 90 millimetres in some areas, beating records set in 2008.

Speaker, there was a follow-up to that. The Toronto Star reported that the preliminary cost of that storm was \$850 million, according to the Insurance Bureau of Canada. That was one of the most expensive natural disasters in the province's history.

And we've seen other damage: In 2005, a windstorm and rainstorm in the GTA cost \$671 million; four days of heavy rain in July 2009 cost \$228 million; and then there's the \$1.5 billion for the ice storm in Quebec in 1998.

So the stakes are really high. We were lucky. None of these reports talk about loss of life, but they do talk about large volumes of money that are going to be needed to protect people and to pay for damages from extreme events.

The National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy earlier this decade calculated that the national cost of climate change for Canada—this is for damage—could escalate from roughly \$5 billion per year in 2020 to between \$21 billion and \$43 billion per year by the 2050s. In a worst-case scenario, the potential is there for costs to be at least \$91 billion per year. We are talking about phenomenal burdens on our economy, and a very strong argument for mitigating the increase in greenhouse gas emissions, for dealing with climate change. But should we fail in any way, the costs will be extraordinary. Governments are going to have to act. Citizens are going to call on them to take action to deal with damages and to protect them.

I haven't seen a calculation for Ontario of what it will cost for us to adapt—to make sure our sewer systems are functional, to make sure that roads are properly protected, that gas pipeline infrastructure is dealt with—but the city of New York has done a calculation in their lawsuit that they are taking against five major fossil fuel companies. They say that they've already committed to spend \$20 billion to protect that city from the impacts of climate change, with further billions to come as the seas rise higher, as temperatures rise and as rainfall increases.

So we are talking costs in the billions. Even if we avoid the worst projections for costs, we're talking tens and hundreds of billions of dollars per decade to deal with damage. We need legislation that will ensure that those companies, the fossil fuel companies—extraordinarily wealthy—are paying their fair share of those costs.

It cannot all be left on the shoulders of average Ontario families. It can't be.

We do have a precedent. We've taken action in the past. Here in Ontario we passed tobacco liability legislation, as we've seen in many provinces in Canada. In September 2005, the Supreme Court found that BC's Tobacco Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act was constitutional. That decision sets the basis for this kind of legislation, that in fact you can legislate for recovery of costs. We need some similar legislation here in Ontario.

Some people may say, "There's a big difference between tobacco and fossil fuels." But the University of Alberta faculty of law publishes a blog, and last year they published an article "Do Comparisons Between Tobacco and Climate Change Liability Withstand Scrutiny?" They looked at the United States, they looked at Canada, and they concluded that, in fact, one of the most important things that happened in the United States with regard to the tobacco industry was the passing of legislation that allowed the use of statistical and epidemiological evidence to go after the liability of the tobacco companies. We need that. Prior to those pieces of legislation, it was very difficult to win against tobacco companies. But after it was passed in the United States, the industry went from never losing a case to settling for US\$240 billion. We're talking very big dollars. In a province that is already stretched to meet its social needs, its medicare system, its education system, its infrastructure costs, we can't afford to take all this on. The fossil fuel companies have to pay their fair share.

1530

The Alberta law faculty blog went on say that there were real similarities between tobacco legislation and what they saw in the future as related climate legislation. They noted that one of the big similarities included well-documented campaigns of denial in the face of mounting scientific evidence in both contexts. The reality is, the fossil fuel companies are following the same playbook as the tobacco companies followed, and we need to act in a way that's proven to be effective.

New York City is engaged in a lawsuit with major fossil fuel companies, who they say—and they go into great detail in their lawsuit; I think it's great reading. They said, "For decades defendants have known that their fossil fuel products pose risks of 'severe' and even 'catastrophic' impacts on the global climate through the work and warnings of their own scientists and/or through their trade association, the" American Petroleum Institute.

"Yet each defendant decided to continue its conduct and commit itself to massive fossil fuel production. This deliberate decision placed company profits ahead of human safety, well-being, and property, and foisted onto the public the costs of abating and adapting to climate change."

They go into great detail about what the fossil fuel companies knew as far back as the 1950s. They knew that there was a risk of a catastrophic impact on econ-

omies and significant loss of life. They had the knowledge. They acted contrary to the interests of our society. They should be paying their fair share of dealing with the damages and the cost of preventing damage.

We are able to put forward a piece of legislation like this because the science has changed. It's much easier now to determine what the responsibility is of individual companies—that's been studied—and to determine whether an extreme weather event is climate related.

Speaker, the potential is there to protect Ontario, to set a precedent for the rest of North America, to build on the legislation that we already have in place to protect us from tobacco impacts. We need to pass this legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate? I recognize the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Chris Ballard: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and a sincere thank you to the member for Toronto—Danforth for a couple of things: one, his sincere belief and concerns and desire for action around climate change mitigation and adaptation; and secondly, his recognition that the costs of not acting on climate change are far greater than the costs of reducing greenhouse gas pollution. I can say that we are looking forward to reviewing further his private member's bill. We're going to consider it as an opportunity to build on the work we're doing to fight climate change.

With that in mind, I just wanted to take a couple of minutes on that topic. I can say that Ontario has undertaken significant action in the fight against climate change. Our foundational block is our cap-and-trade legislation and program that puts a cap on the amount of pollution industry is allowed to spew into the air each year. It lowers the cap each year, and proceeds from our cap-and-trade auction—proceeds which, in this year, in the first year of the cap-and-trade program, amounted to some \$2.4 billion, every penny of which must, by law, be invested in projects and programs that further reduce greenhouse gas pollution and carbon pollution.

We are following this path of cap-and-trade. It has been shown, where it has been implemented with our partners in California and our partners in Quebec, to offer the most efficient way and the most effective way to reduce greenhouse gas pollution emissions at the lowest cost to Ontario residents and Ontario businesses.

I'll say it again, Speaker: Each and every year, the cap on the amount of greenhouse gas pollution that businesses are allowed to spew into the air is reduced, so that we can march towards our target.

I can say that in 2014, Ontario exceeded its carbon reduction targets, in part because of the closure of the coal-burning plants that created electricity at great cost to the environment. We are on track to hit our 2020 targets, so we'll continue to march in that direction.

I can tell you, Speaker, that in the short time I've been in this portfolio, when I have had the opportunity to travel outside of Ontario, I am impressed by the stature by which other governments—national and subnational governments—hold Ontario. There isn't an event that I

have been to where folks from US states, from countries like Australia, New Zealand, Germany and the UK, haven't sat down with us and said, "How did you put cap-and-trade together that is making such a difference? What advice would you have for us?"

In fact, just a few weeks ago, the former Vice-President of the United States, Al Gore, was in Toronto talking to public school students from across Ontario, and Ryerson students. In his remarks, Al Gore said that he travels the world as a climate change advocate, and often, Al Gore is asked who other countries can turn to, and who has a model that they can look at. Al Gore says that when it comes to responsible leadership and action on climate change, "I always point to Ontario." Speaker, I can reaffirm that in my travels, that's exactly what I see: Ontario is seen as a leader.

We have a cap on greenhouse gas pollution. It goes down every year. The model of cap-and-trade provides us with proceeds which we are investing in programs to further reduce greenhouse gas pollution.

We have budgeted \$1.9 billion per year over the next four years. Some of the things that we've invested in this year are: to improve social housing, \$200 million; to improve colleges and universities, some \$500 million; and \$100 million to put into hospitals. All of this allows those facilities to take the money they would have spent on upgrading their facilities, the money they would have had to spend on energy—things like fossil fuels and burning natural gas—they take those savings and put them into the things they are supposed to do, which are taking care of their patients, taking care of their schools and providing a better environment for people who live in their social housing units.

Mr. James J. Bradley: What a good idea.

Hon. Chris Ballard: It's a brilliant idea. We can thank Premier Kathleen Wynne for taking the lead on this initiative.

One of the other very popular programs that we have in place is our GreenON Rebates. I can tell you that contractors and small business people from across Ontario are thanking this province for cap-and-trade, because, again, the proceeds from cap-and-trade are being invested in homeowners across the province, who are better able to insulate their attics, put in better windows and use air-source heat pumps as a better way of warming and cooling their houses. Frankly, the slogan for the GreenON Rebates program is "Save Money, Fight Climate Change," and that's what Ontarians are asking us to do: to help them, to provide them with ways of fighting climate change.

1540

I'll sum up and I'll thank the MPP for Toronto-Danforth for this bill. I look forward to examining it in more depth. I'll leave my remarks there.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It's a pleasure to rise again in the House and to contribute to the debate that we're discussing today. I want to, as I have on multiple occasions

in this House now, thank the NDP for being very open about where they come from, very transparent about their philosophical orientation, their particular perspective on these types of issues, and for really being honest about the fact that they're a big-taxing party, they're a big-spending party, but they're okay with at least acknowledging that and being honest about their own background and their own perspective on government intervention to the extent of nationalizing, or however else you want to describe it.

In listening to the debate, I was really impressed by the member for Toronto-Danforth and his comparisons—I think they're quite hare-brained comparisons, quite frankly, some of them—between tobacco companies and fossil fuel companies. I think that's drawing a comparison that I would say is inaccurate and overblown.

At the same time, I want to be very open about the fact that I appreciate your honesty. I appreciate the fact that you're willing to stand for what you believe in—which, I might add, Madam Speaker, is very different from the Liberal government.

This is the real amazing thing that we've seen. I think we've seen a government here provincially that has really gone very far left in some areas. We've seen a government that is more than happy to abandon fiscal responsibility and abandon any pretense of support for job creators in the province of Ontario. But they're still good at paying lip service, you know? This is something that the Liberals like to do, is to pay lip service—

Mr. Bill Walker: And shell games.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: And shell games, as well, with moving money around, pretending to balance the budget.

I want to remind the Legislature of a situation going back to, I believe, the 2008 federal election. Does anyone remember the Green Shift?

Look, I think climate change is a real threat, and one that all of us agree we need to work on. We need to push for solutions. We need to push for conservation. We need to push for diversion of recycling. Only 15% of the waste from the city of Toronto is actually recycled; the rest is sent into landfills in municipalities in rural Ontario. A lot of the—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Order.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Now, when the Liberals in 2008 campaigned on a carbon tax, what happened? The electorate said, "Whoa! What's going on? You're going to campaign on a carbon tax? I think we're going to say no to that." They gave the Conservatives a second government. For the next several years, in fact, they formed government, to the point of a majority government in 2011.

What happened in 2015? We saw a Liberal majority government. I'll acknowledge the choice of the electorate. I'm very much in favour of a strong democracy, so I think it's a good thing that the electorate's choice was made. Everyone, I think, acknowledges that. But the interesting thing, Madam Speaker, is that the Liberals did not campaign on a carbon tax. The Liberals did not say

that they were going to bring in a carbon tax, and yet that's exactly what the federal Liberals did.

Now, I understand that the provincial Liberals figured, "Do you know what? We're going to play a little bit of a different game. We're going to call our slush fund the cap-and-trade slush fund." But at the end of the day—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'm going to ask the member to withdraw that word.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Shame.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Withdrawn.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Continue.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: The heckling from the government benches, which, I think, is referring to the government's own actions towards the people of Ontario as being shameful and disrespectful, is accurate, to put it mildly. To see the sort of deception that is played by—

Interjection: Whoa!

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Oh, I'm sorry. I withdraw; I withdraw. For that, I apologize. That was uncalled for and unparliamentary, and I wish to extend my apologies.

To return to the matter at hand, what the member for Toronto—Danforth is doing is being very honest about the fact that he views our job creators in the province of Ontario, those who also help with the fuel that we take to drive our cars, those who also help with—whether it's methane producers; I think of my farmers in Niagara West—Glanbrook. We have dairy farmers as well. I don't know where they stand on the level of emitters that the member is talking about. I'm not sure whether or not they're going to all of a sudden be faced with lawsuits from local complainants who may not like the fact that it might smell a little bit downwind from a dairy farm.

I'm not sure how this is going to play out if an NDP government comes in and forces this on our job creators and forces this on those who help to fuel, really, our heating and help to fuel the way of life that we're used to. But I want to thank the NDP for being very honest about where they're coming from, because this is not what we see from the Liberals.

The Liberals will campaign on—do you remember this?—no new taxes. I think a former Premier in this House actually signed a pledge saying that he was not going to raise taxes. I remember that. I remember that very clearly, and I think that that is sort of a testament to 15 years of broken promises.

Congratulations to the NDP for being willing to actually stand by their principles.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am glad to weigh in on Bill 21, Liability for Climate-Related Harms Act. It's always interesting to be a part of the broader debate and listen to the remarks from those around the room. It's nice to also be recognized by the member who just spoke for our principles. It's also refreshing to imagine that there are folks in this room who recognize principles still. I wonder if there are some who can't, but here we stand.

I'm glad to stand, of course, in support of this bill put forward by the member from Toronto—Danforth. Again,

this is the Liability for Climate-Related Harms Act. There were some questions just raised by the Conservative member, and I'll be glad to flesh out a little bit more understanding for them.

This is a bill that provides a framework for citizens and for businesses and governments in Ontario to sue big oil and gas corporations for climate-related damages for their products. This is about the world's largest fossil fuel corporations that need to start to take responsibility for the damage that they are doing, to be accountable and to pay their fair share when it comes to that damage.

As we heard from the member earlier, we're seeing remarkable damage and economic challenge in the wake of storms and catastrophes happening in our own communities. He talked about Windsor—I will as well—but we're seeing across our communities that the costs are going up and we're needing to call on those who are helping to create the problem to help be part of the solution, which is what we have here. This bill follows in the footsteps of the tobacco liability legislation that is in place in Ontario to allow governments to sue for health care costs.

With this bill, the Liability for Climate-Related Harms Act, those fossil fuel corporations whose products have put enough CO₂ into the atmosphere to be globally detectable—so to the member who was asking about just how much methane, "globally detectable" is what we're talking about in terms of the products. So if you are emitting enough methane to be globally detectable, then you may want to sort yourself out there. They should be paying the price for the climate-change damage that is currently being shouldered by our communities.

I'm sorry that I missed his press conference recently. There were some heavy hitters who were there weighing in on this issue. Dr. James Hansen is a renowned climatologist and former head of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies. He said that in the US, there is already litigation under way by New York City, San Francisco and Oakland. He said, "Unchecked climate change is a threat to humanity. People need a variety of tools and strategies to protect our society. Holding fossil fuel companies liable for the damage from their products is a big step." That's a piece of it.

1550

Greenpeace's senior energy strategist Keith Stewart was also at the press conference and said that elected representatives—ourselves and those who are seeking offices should demonstrate support for this bill because, as he said, "Just like the tobacco companies, oil and coal companies hid what they knew about the science in order to delay policy action that would shrink the market for their product."

When we think about fossil fuel producers who are responsible for emissions at a globally detectable level, they should be held strictly liable for the climate-related harms they cause in Ontario. This bill, as I said, sets out that framework.

The member already talked about those who supported the bill, but I want to talk about what we see in our community, or what I have seen on my own journey.

Back in 1998—I wonder if everybody here remembers 1998—I was in university, in second or third year, or whatever it was, living in Kingston. I remember the ice storm of 1998. At that age, I thought I was a grown-up and was independent, but when the lights went out and the power went off for days and we were without heat—we were resourceful, but it was quite a time. Kingston is a beautiful city. It's a place that I have such a special place in my heart for because that is, again, where I decided to start being a grown-up. All of the trees were so damaged, and they came down. The ice was unbelievable. We had a little bit of fun the first day; we weren't in crisis mode yet. But after a couple of days without water and without power and without heat, it was very challenging, and that was for young, resilient youth, all coming together. The struggle at that time was a lot—but it was the cleanup afterwards. It really was quite heartbreaking to drive around the following spring and see all of the trees that had lost all of their big branches. There was so much damage across that one community, and so to imagine that and extrapolate that across the province and across the areas affected—the Quebec ice storm of 1998 is the most expensive storm on record. The damages came to \$1.5 billion. That's just one storm that we can point to; since then, we can all imagine many.

I did some advocacy about a storm in December 2013. My community of Oshawa sustained a fair bit of damage, and we had to encourage the government to move along with the funds that they promised them. It's an expensive proposition to serve and support our communities, especially with these damaging storms.

The member from Toronto—Danforth and the members from Windsor and Essex and, well, this whole back area here, with the storms in Windsor, doing all of that advocacy, because the unbelievable cost of the damage and the storm after storm after storm—it was awful, and it continues to be awful because insurance isn't covering the damages for many of those families and many of those homes.

And we're just seeing more. In fact, when we look back at this recent storm season, 2017—how many of us learned the difference between category 3 and 4 and 5 hurricanes? During the last Atlantic hurricane season, we were all watching Irma and Harvey with bated breath to see—hopefully, not the devastation.

Our storm seasons seem to be worsening. Again, if there is a way to ameliorate and to help our communities to pay for the fallout, let's do that. We have an opportunity here to have this kind of conversation.

I'm going to go in a different direction.

When we talk about accountability and responsibility for our climate and for our environment, I was a bit interested—I'll challenge some of what the minister said. This government always holds up California as such a shining example. I lived in California during the energy crisis. I did high school there. It was interesting because, after that, when we all found out about about Enron having defrauded California out of billions of dollars—in the 1990s, when we were watching all the rolling brown-

outs, I was living through that—Enron was one of the chief proponents of the state deregulation which led to this crisis.

Let's look to ourselves for how to best solve this. We have an opportunity here to have a conversation on how to be responsible. Let's have that conversation.

And just a side note, Speaker: I'm sure your constituency office also got these two boxes. Everyone would have gotten those two boxes, 27 pounds each, of those paper books, *Fighting Climate Change: Better Communities*. I would argue it's campaign literature, but anyway, it's the government's climate change plan. Well, 54 pounds of paper is not how we tackle climate change, and I wonder what that cost to send, but there we have it.

Let's actually use a worthwhile example here. When you look at the government of Canada website and their enforcement notifications for violators, we don't have to look very far. I'm just going to read the headlines. I'm running out of time. I'm just going to read the notifications, and this is all public. If you are curious about the kind of—well, I'll just read this to you:

—the most recent one, on March 27: “Environmental Charges Laid Against Husky Energy Inc. and Husky Oil Operations Ltd. in Relation to the Pipeline Release of Blended Heavy Crude Oil into the North Saskatchewan River”;

—March 14: “Agricultural Products-and-Services Provider Fined \$150K for Environmental Violations”;

—“British Columbia Manufacturer of Plant-Based Foods Fined for Fisheries Act Violation”;

—“Company Found Guilty of Fisheries Act Violation in Lac-Mégantic Derailment Case”;

—“Fishing Vessel Owner Sentenced in British Columbia for Violation of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999”;

—“Petroleum Company Sentenced for Offences under the Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994”;

—“Mining Company in British Columbia Fined for Fisheries Act Violations.”

I have, like, three pages from just the past two years, and when you read it, it's remarkable just how many companies are choosing to say, “It's the cost of doing business, these environmental fines.” They're going to make harmful choices for our communities. Many of these are intentional when you read through them; some are accidental.

But this is just small and mid-sized. Imagine, on a global scale, these massive emitters. When we have government situations where our hands are tied and our policy can't protect us environmentally—look at Canada's track record under NAFTA chapter 11. We're the most sued nation, and we have the worst record. I think we've lost nine cases. The States haven't lost any. Anyway, we are paying out to these companies who are challenging our government and saying, “We don't like your environmental regulations. You are hampering our potential for profit,” and that drives our governments to—it has that effect of policy chill: “Maybe we don't put those environmental regulations into place, because we could end up sued.”

If it makes our government think twice, and if it makes governments think twice about how they do business, imagine the potential for a bill like this. The province of Ontario says, "If you are going to have a measurably devastating impact on our environment, then we're going to hold you responsible and we're going to make you think twice." We have the opportunity to do that here today, and I hope that everyone in this Legislature will take the opportunity to support this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Arthur Potts: Speaker, I get a chance once again to speak in the House today, and I'm absolutely honoured for this opportunity, so thank you. It's an opportunity to speak to Bill 21, An Act respecting civil liability for climate-related harms.

I commend the member for Toronto–Danforth for bringing forward a bill. The principal act here in the act is polluter pay. I think we all accept the notion that the polluter should pay for the harms associated with the pollution they put out. I think that's important, that we recognize that we all accept that principle.

My concern with this bill, however, Speaker, is its absolute lack of enforceability, of being able to get anywhere close to any kind of conviction to even determine the measure of damages associated with it. This bill, in my view, would create a complete morass of legal and scientific evidence which would drag on absolutely forever. This is red tape to the extreme—not in the sense that you are asking people to do certain things and follow certain regulations, but it absolutely puts the fear of God into anybody who is using a fossil fuel source that in some way you're going to try to attribute something that has happened somewhere else to their activities.

1600

I look at even just the definition of "climate change" in the bill. It means "a long-term change in the Earth's climate caused by the alteration of concentrations of greenhouse gas in the global atmosphere." At what level? How much is there that wouldn't have otherwise been there? How much is attributable to a cyclical warming? How much is attributable to an increase in the population of crickets and other methane insects in the world? How much to animals and such?

The definition itself is mired in scientific controversy, and when you look at the list of liabilities without limitations, it is astounding. When you try to figure out how you're going to assess the costs associated with economic loss or physical loss of property and infrastructure that is specifically attributed to the carbon associated with that one particular actor, it's almost unconscionable to even have people contemplate how they would go about doing this.

Harm related to ocean acidification: You know, the cod stocks dropping—some might argue that acidification of the ocean as a result of acid rains has resulted in the micro-organisms that feed the protozoans that feed the fish and this is all contributing to it. How do you

assess the impact associated with one actor? You can't do it, Speaker.

What I see in this bill is a well-intentioned straw man, a political straw man that the member puts forward. It is, "Look at me; I'm out there, being active to fight climate change," but it does absolutely nothing to do it.

What we need to do is we need to listen to what the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change had to say about the programs that are in place, because what you need is not this kind of a heavy sledgehammer approach; you need to have incentives, incentives to build new technologies that will reduce our carbon footprint, incentives so people can be in electric vehicles and incentives so that people can build hydrogen-powered cars.

I am so proud of the fact that two and a half years ago, as an environmental champion, as I believe I am, as a steward for the environment, I went to the Ministry of Transportation and insisted that when they build these new ferries out in Kingston to go to Wolfe Island and to go to Amherst Island, that they not be diesel-spewing but that they actually be electric. We came back and we did that. I'm so proud of the fact that as an environmental champion in this government, I insisted the Ministry of Energy would include a power-to-fuel option that would use surplus electricity in our system, of which frankly we have a fair bit, to make a non-carbon fuel like hydrogen or super-hot air they could drive into boilers. This is the kind of innovative work that is coming as a result of the investments that we can make from the proceeds of cap-and-trade.

A bill like this just puts a complete chill on anybody who is engaging in hot air and does nothing to address climate change because it's unenforceable and it ties people up in courts to no useful end. I'm not supporting it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's my pleasure to stand today and contribute to this debate, specifically on Bill 21, Liability for Climate-Related Harms Act, on behalf of my constituents of Huron–Bruce. While the member from Toronto–Danforth and I know that we each care about the environment, I think the reality is that in some cases, we just go about it differently. Unfortunately, today is an example where we're going to have to agree to disagree, okay?

I'm going to be frank, though. The legislation before us is an unworkable law that leaves too much to interpretation and regulation, and when it comes to regulation, it does make people very nervous with red tape and handcuffing. The Liberal government has already done enough to drive business out of Ontario; we don't need to keep perpetuating reasons to leave this province.

Speaker, I would suggest to you that everyone in this province needs reliable and affordable energy, and we need to call a spade a spade here. This bill would make the providers of energy liable in the future for an ambigu-

ous and completely arbitrary amount of climate-related harm associated with the production of fossil fuels.

We all know what this bill is, Speaker. It is political positioning to show that the NDP care about the environment. But I must be very clear here: We all care about the environment. In fact, I must remind everyone here today that it was actually Bill Davis who created the Ministry of the Environment, and it was actually the combination of efforts from Elizabeth Witmer and Jim Wilson that saw Ontario's first coal plant close.

The Liberals have brought forth cap-and-trade, which uses the environment as a ploy to take more money from the hard-working people of Ontario. And you know what I'm talking about: It's another tax. We can all acknowledge that there is room to reduce our carbon emissions, but creating a future liability for fulfilling consumer demand will just increase prices right here and now. When there is an expected liability on the books, the rational behaviour would be to raise prices to address future liability. We've seen it happen over the last 15 years with this government. Unfortunately, this private member's bill is following the same path in that regard.

I do have a question: Does the member who proposed this bill heat his house with natural gas? Does he use a barbecue? Does he buy food from stores? Does he know how the food got to the stores? Typically, the larger trucks that do the deliveries use a combustion engine. What I'm trying to point out here is that increasing energy costs would increase our bills, of course, but the reality is that it increases the cost of everything. And do you know what? We already have people in the province of Ontario choosing to heat or eat, and scratching to get by.

Through the current government's disastrous Green Energy Act, we've seen countless Ontarians pushed into energy poverty. We have seen people who have had to choose, as I said, to make difficult decisions. Unfortunately, bills like we're debating today, ultimately, disproportionately hurt vulnerable Ontarians the most. This bill before us today would directly make life in Ontario more unaffordable, and shows that there is only truly one party that is committed to making life easier for people in Ontario. It is only the Ontario PC Party that is rallying for a better Ontario.

A report from the Clean Economy Alliance acknowledged last week that Ontario's cap-and-trade program hasn't had a tremendous impact on reducing emissions. This so-called bill is a perfect example of the problematic climate policies that we have seen come into this House and negatively impact people over the last 15 years. Too often, the policies are about laying blame, pointing fingers, photo ops, platitudes and more taxes.

I know that the member from Toronto–Danforth is passionate about climate change, but I think we have to consider what this bill actually does for climate change. Will it help mitigate emissions? No. Will this expand the size of government? Yes. Will this expand the role of government in the economy? Yes. Will it make doing

business in Ontario tougher? Yes. Will it make life more unaffordable in Ontario? Yes.

I'm all about protecting Ontarians. I think all of us in this Legislature value the safety of Ontarians and the preservation of our natural environment. But I also think we need to acknowledge what is already happening and in place to sequester carbon. We need to enable Ontarians to reduce emissions through new innovations and technologies, and acknowledge what is already happening; for example, with our Ontario farmers. Do we need to increase the cost of living and doing business in Ontario to reduce emissions? No.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member Toronto–Danforth to wrap up.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: As always, I want to thank the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, the member for Niagara West–Glanbrook, the member for Oshawa, the member for Beaches–East York and the member for Huron–Bruce for commenting on my bill.

Before I go further, I also want to thank West Coast Environmental Law and Greenpeace for their assistance in writing this bill; their advice was invaluable. And I want to thank Dr. James Hansen for lending his credibility to this bill when he attended our media conference.

1610

Speaker, it's unfortunate that the member for Niagara West–Glanbrook hadn't read my bill. I think his remarks would have been better informed if he had read it. I just want to say that if he'd read it, he'd have noticed that we aren't talking about small emitters. We're not talking about farms; we're talking about major fossil fuel companies. That's very clear in the bill.

In fact, there has been a lot of scientific research done to show that something like 50% to 60% of the emissions in the atmosphere that are making this planet hotter come from about 90 firms, private and state-owned. So we're not talking about small operations—just as with tobacco liability legislation, we talked about the big tobacco companies, not about corner stores.

With regard to the member for Huron–Bruce, I think the reality is, we're going to be paying a lot more for insurance and people are going to be driven from their homes by flooding, and their party is not prepared to either prevent that or give assistance to those who are hurt. Usually they talk about personal responsibility. I think responsibility of fossil fuel companies is a principle that's consistent with conservatism, but apparently not.

The member for Beaches–East York: I don't quite understand his logic. Frankly, I'm sure that he supported tobacco liability legislation when it was before this Legislature, and in the United States tobacco liability legislation led to payment of hundreds of billions of dollars to states to deal with their costs. It's a very comparable situation.

This is a good bill. It deserves to pass.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

HOME CARE AND COMMUNITY
SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT
(DAN'S LAW), 2018

LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES SERVICES DE SOINS
À DOMICILE ET LES SERVICES
COMMUNAUTAIRES (LOI DAN)

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will deal first with ballot item number 7, standing in the name of Mrs. Gretzky.

Mrs. Gretzky has moved second reading of Bill 5, An Act to amend the Home Care and Community Services Act, 1994 in respect of funded services for new residents.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear "carry."

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'm going to turn to the member in terms of which committee she wants to refer the bill to.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: The Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Agreed? I hear "agreed." Congratulations.

YOUTH POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT
ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR L'ENGAGEMENT
POLITIQUE DES JEUNES

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Potts has moved second reading of Bill 38, An Act to amend the Election Act with respect to voter eligibility.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear "carry."

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'm going to turn to the member about which committee he's going to refer the bill to.

Mr. Arthur Potts: It's a matter of youth justice—justice policy committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Agreed? I hear "agreed." Congratulations.

LIABILITY FOR CLIMATE-RELATED
HARMS ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018
SUR LA RESPONSABILITÉ À L'ÉGARD
DES DOMMAGES LIÉS AU CLIMAT

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Tabuns has moved second reading of Bill 21, An Act respecting civil liability for climate-related harms.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carries? I hear a no here. I'm going to go again.

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Interjection: On division.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Carried on division.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'm going to turn to the member to identify which committee he wants to refer the bill to.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'd like it referred to regulations and private bills.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Agreed? I hear "agreed." Congratulations.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
TRANSFORMATION ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR LA TRANSFORMATION
DES SERVICES CORRECTIONNELS

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 10, 2018, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 6, An Act to enact the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services Act, 2018 and the Correctional Services and Reintegration Act, 2018, to make related amendments to other Acts, to repeal an Act and to revoke a regulation / *Projet de loi 6, Loi édictant la Loi de 2018 sur le ministère de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels et la Loi de 2018 sur les services correctionnels et la réinsertion sociale, apportant des modifications connexes à d'autres lois et abrogeant une loi et un règlement.*

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to the order of the House dated April 12, 2018, I am now required to put the question.

Madame Lalonde has moved second reading of Bill 6, An Act to enact the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services Act, 2018 and the Correctional Services and Reintegration Act, 2018, to make related amendments to other Acts, to repeal an Act and to revoke a regulation.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): "Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on second reading of Bill 6, the Correctional Services Transformation Act, 2018, be deferred until Monday, April 16, 2018."

Second reading vote deferred.

PLAN FOR CARE
AND OPPORTUNITY ACT
(BUDGET MEASURES), 2018

LOI DE 2018 POUR UN PLAN AXÉ
SUR LE MIEUX-ÊTRE ET L'AVENIR
(MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 11, 2018, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 31, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes / Projet de loi 31, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to stand in this place and represent the views of the people of Timiskaming-Cochrane and, today, also the views of my NDP colleagues and my leader, Andrea Horwath, in response to the government's Bill 31, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes.

I would like to start, since this has actually been my first opportunity to speak in the House since the tragic accident in Humboldt, Saskatchewan, by saying that our hearts, the hearts of the people of Timiskaming-Cochrane, are with those families who have lost loved ones.

I think that hockey is the glue that bonds Canada together, nowhere more than in rural Ontario. There is a little bit of a connection in all our hearts, but one of the players for the Kirkland Lake Gold Miners was traded from the Humboldt Broncos last October, so it reaches across Canada. It was an honour to be in the Legislature this morning, with all the other Legislatures, and our hearts go out to those families who have suffered so terribly. It's a proud day for us to be Canadians.

Having said that, Speaker, a budget and a government's priorities—it's not an easy job to represent the people of Ontario, because Ontario is a very diverse place. Our last bill was talking about weather changes. If you just look at the diversity of weather and how people deal with weather in this province—I drive six hours every week to work. At home, there is about two feet of snow right now. It's much different than here.

Yesterday, I met with the people who organized the Ontario Outdoor Farm Show, in Woodstock. It's one of the biggest farm shows in the country—in North America, actually. I don't want to hurt their feelings, but it's not my favourite farm show. My favourite farm show—I'm going to give a shameless plug—

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: It has to do with the budget. I'll get there. I have an hour.

The Earlton Farm Show is going to be held this weekend. If you want to talk about farming in northern Ontario—and I know the government of the day is very interested in farming in northern Ontario—the Earlton Farm Show is where to go if you want to learn about

farming in northern Ontario. That's happening this weekend.

I'm just going to give a little bit of a plug on how to get there, because not everybody knows how to get to Earlton. You go up Avenue Road, up Highway 400. Keep going through North Bay and go up 11. You'll crest this hill, and you'll know that you're in farm country. You've gone through three hours of Canadian Shield, and you will crest this hill and you will see nothing in front of you but farmland—acres and acres. There are actually 400,000 acres—200,000 acres in Quebec and 200,000 acres in Ontario—and it's completely developed. There are big farm equipment dealers. There are elevators. It's a total change of scenery compared to what you have seen for the last three hours. To us, we're very proud of it, but it is one of the wonders of Ontario when you crest that hill. The Earlton Farm Show is where these people gather.

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It's kind of a running joke, I have to say, whenever we hear someone from the Ministry of Agriculture or people like me speaking about how the government is going to develop agriculture in northern Ontario, because it's already there. There is a lot of potential, and I'm going to get to that. But the nucleus of agriculture is already there. The understanding of the people, how to do it, is already there. They don't need to be taught how to farm in northern Ontario.

There are things that the government can do. I give credit where credit is due. We worked for years, when I was the president of the federation of agriculture locally, with various governments to try and get the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund to recognize agriculture. They did. To this government's credit, they continue to do so. The heritage fund has done wonders for the agriculture sector in northern Ontario.

That's where I'm getting to the budget. We disagree with the vast majority of the direction of this government regarding their financial goals. It's a saying that I will never—I like using it, but it escaped my mind. No, it hasn't: Even a broken clock is right twice a day. So once in a while—the heritage fund in northern Ontario and its commitment to agriculture in northern Ontario is something that we continue to push for, that we will continue to support, and it's something that's worked. I'd just like to get that on that record.

While I'm speaking about agriculture, I'd like to put another plug in. The only event that this Legislature stops for is the International Plowing Match. The International Plowing Match is going to be, I believe, in Chatham this year upcoming. I give a shout-out to Chatham. But in 2019, it's going to be in Verner.

Verner is in the great riding of Timiskaming-Cochrane. It's about three and half hours north of here. It's also a very well-developed agricultural area. It's totally bilingual. There's a very high percentage of Francophone people in Timiskaming-Cochrane, in northern Ontario, but Verner, West Nipissing, is the only municipality I have that is totally and completely

bilingual. That's kudos to them. They are going to put on a show that none of us—and hopefully, some of us will be back after the election, and those of us who have decided not to run for election are very welcome.

Interjections.

Mr. John Vanthof: Guided tour.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: You would be a great host.

Mr. John Vanthof: I would be very happy. I truly mean that. I would be very happy to give anyone, but especially people who I have learned—and in the case of Tracy, I was elected the same time as you were.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: In 2011? Seems longer.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes. I would be very happy to give a guided tour.

Getting back to how diverse this province is, I just point to a little bit of diversity in my riding. I've talked about the two agricultural sectors in my riding. There is another agriculture sector that has much more potential for development. That's the Cochrane area. But in between those is Kirkland Lake.

Kirkland Lake is a town of about 8,000 people. Kirkland Lake was built on gold. Their main street is called the "Mile of Gold." There is a story behind that. Kirkland Lake has gone through some really tough times. But Kirkland Lake is now on the cusp of another boom, because the company Kirkland Lake Gold has announced that they're going to put a new shaft in their main gold complex. That is going to mean a lot of work for a lot of years. Actually, the construction has started on a FedEx distribution centre in Kirkland Lake. So Kirkland Lake is going to see a resurgence or is seeing a resurgence. It's a great town.

I'd like to commend Kirkland Lake Gold, because Kirkland Lake Gold has just announced, as a demonstration of their commitment to the community, that they are donating over \$3 million to the Kirkland and District Hospital for a CAT scan and an ICU, which is great news for Kirkland and District Hospital.

So even in my riding there is a lot of diversity, and as you travel farther through the province there's even more diversity.

I just saw in my notes that I should mention one more thing about Kirkland Lake.

Hon. David Zimmer: What? Two more things.

Mr. John Vanthof: One more.

On April 3, there was a fire in Kirkland Lake and it was the building in Kirkland Lake that housed MNDM, MNR, ODSP offices and ServiceOntario. We're all working very hard to make sure those services are maintained. I'd like to commend the firefighters, the town and the public service employees who are doing everything they can to make sure that those services are maintained. It's very important.

Those are just a few things that are different in my part of the province, our part of the province. The GTA isn't all about farms or mines; there are totally other industries, totally other demographics. But we all rely on the government to provide services, to administer

services, to collect taxes. Nobody likes to pay taxes. I think that's pretty obvious.

This is my second opportunity to speak, as finance critic, on a budget. The one thing that has become very clear to me is that although we are very good at trading barbs and we all have different views on how the province should run and where money should go or shouldn't go, for a lot of the basic structures, we speak in a language that many people don't understand or don't translate into their everyday lives. They hear about debt and they hear about deficit and statements like "structural deficit" and "bond rating agencies." It's not that they can't understand, but it's in a language that is not presented so they actually can relate it to their own lives. If people don't understand something, they won't relate to it, they won't relate to what we're saying, and that's bad. It's not only bad for democracy, but it's bad for citizens to not really understand how things work.

Before I actually comment on the budget itself, I'm going to try to relate on a more individual scale how the province runs.

We hear a lot about debt and deficit and how much the government brings in. If you bring that to a household level, the government taxation is your income. When the government gets people to pay taxes, gets companies to pay taxes, revenues, tolls, that is their income. With that income, like your household income, that's how you pay expenses. Your food, your groceries, your—you relate that to services the government provides.

Now, we hear about debt and deficit, and some people will tell you that all debt is bad and that if you run a debt, you're not doing something right. Well, then, you're basically telling everyone in the province who has a mortgage on their house that they are a failure. That's not the case. There are certain things that you are not going to pay for with savings. You have to borrow money and pay that money off slowly so you can afford to buy things you can't buy from your daily income. That's your debt, and that's the same that the province has. If the province wants to build infrastructure—whichever government is in place—and if the cost of that infrastructure is more than their yearly income, or more than many years of income, you'll have to spread that out over a longer period. That is the province's debt.

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The tricky part of that is to make sure that what you're spending, what you're willing to borrow money for, is actually going to provide a long-term benefit for the people of the province, just like if your family is going to get a mortgage, that it's going to be something that is going to provide benefit to your family for many years and hopefully have some residual value. A house will have residual value, but also, in the province's case, that infrastructure is going to drive the economy. You could have long-term infrastructure and borrow money over a longer period, perhaps building a hospital or building a road. That could be financed over 25 years or whatever. It's like buying a house.

Where you get into trouble, and where the province can get into trouble, is if you buy something—if you need

to go to work, you need a car. You might have to borrow money for a car. But if you have to borrow the money for the car over 20 years and the car is only going to last seven or five, then you're paying debts, you're making payments on something that no longer exists. That is where you run into big trouble. Later on, I'll speak on the examples of where the province has done that. So there's a difference between productive debt and bad debt, and if you have too much bad debt, then you've got a problem.

A lot of people don't understand—or don't take the time to understand, or we don't explain carefully enough—the difference between debt and deficit. A deficit is if your yearly income, and something happens—we just talked about cars. If your car breaks down or you have an unexpected expense, one year you could run a deficit because your expenses are more than your income. That's a deficit. That can happen. That can happen in your personal income, but that can also happen to a province. That's not necessarily a bad thing.

Where deficits get to be a bad thing—and where bankers will talk about structural deficits—is if you know that no matter what you do, your income is not going to match your expenses. That's a structural deficit. With that, you have to make some changes. You either have to raise your income or change your expenses.

Again, you have to look at that very closely, because in the province's case, there are certain things—if you're actually increasing your services or you're driving something that's going to help the economy, a deficit could be a good thing. It's the same as if you're making mortgage payments on your house and your house needs a new roof, and you don't put the new roof on and your house slowly rots because you're not putting on a new roof, you know what? Taking a loan over four or five years to put a new roof on your house is actually a lot smarter than having your house fall in because you don't want to borrow the money for a new roof. It's the same with the province.

When you hear people talk about a province owing too much money and the credit agencies and the bond raters will raise the interest, that's the same as if you have a bad credit rating. If you make bad decisions, the interest that you pay will go up. That's the same for a government. If they make bad decisions and they borrow money on things that aren't going to—again, I'll go back to my example of a car. If you're going to buy a car over 20 years—and there are a lot of people now who buy cars on eight years of payments. I'm going to get to that later, too. That's a sign that people are having a tougher time making it because that is a sign that they're stretched to the limit. Again, that is a sign that you're getting into the territory where your interest payments are going to be much higher. It's the same with the province. But it's not necessarily—debt isn't necessarily bad. It's how you structure the debt and it's what you spend the money on. That's what's important.

Hopefully I've been somewhat successful in bringing that to a personal level—not sure if I have—but I find that a lot of times when I listen to these debates, they are

way over my head, not because the concepts are over people's heads but the language we use isn't the same as the language that you use on the street. Everybody knows what a mortgage is and what a mortgage payment is. That is your debt. Everyone knows what a credit card is. You could use a credit card to cover your deficit or your short-term debt but there's certain things you don't want to finance on a credit card because the interest is way too high. Hopefully I've brought that.

Now I'm going to go back to the more political part regarding the budget and the budget motion and the budget bill. This government has been in power for 15 years. A lot of the things that are happening in the province, and I'll use a couple of examples, but two that we use quite a bit—one is hospital wait times and the other is the energy system in the province. A lot of the issues that are happening in the province now haven't happened by accident. I'm not saying that everything is the government's fault, but governments have made decisions, and government makes decisions and is responsible for those decisions. One of those decisions is how they fund health care.

Health care is the biggest cost in our province. You will often hear—the Premier will tell us, and the Minister of Health, that their spending has gone up on health care overall every year. That's not the case for hospitals. It often happens that the actual spending on hospitals has been below the rate of inflation. Costs go up every year; that's the rate of inflation. If the budget of the hospital doesn't equal the rate of inflation, that's effectively a cut. It might be an increase in funding, but it's a cut in the purchasing power of the hospital. As a result, the administration of the hospital is going to have to make changes to accommodate the erosion of their spending power, of their buying power. Over the long-term, that results in cuts in services. The example of that is people waiting, being treated in hallways, in washrooms. That's an example.

We can talk all we want about finances and where the money comes from, but the fact of the matter is, when someone is treated in the hallway or they're put in a washroom or a shower room, obviously there's something wrong with their experience in the hospital, and that comes from a long-term funding erosion of buying power.

The government has acknowledged that. They acknowledged that in this budget. So this budget has—I believe they're promising another \$800 million that they're going to put into hospitals to fix that problem. The problem with that is that this government has been in power for 15 years. It has watched this problem happen, and now, at the eleventh hour, it's saying, "You know what? Just vote for us one more time and we'll fix this problem that we've been watching and helping to create. We'll fix it. Just vote for us one more time."

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I think that people are growing—I think people have made their decision. They haven't made a decision on who's going to replace them yet, but I think they have

made the decision that the government is going to be replaced. I am sure.

Hon. David Zimmer: That's too horrible to contemplate.

Mr. John Vanthof: I am sure that for the minister it is pretty horrible to contemplate, but for the people of Ontario, they are finished contemplating.

It reminds me, Speaker, of a cartoon strip. Do they still have cartoon strips in newspapers? One of my favourite ones is the Wizard of Id. Does anyone remember the Wizard of Id? Just to give you a recap of the Wizard of Id, it's a kingdom called Id, and it's ruled by a king—a bit of a tyrant—and he has a wizard and he has a knight, Sir Rodney. Anyway, he has quite a cast of characters.

Hon. David Zimmer: Like his cabinet.

Mr. John Vanthof: Like his cabinet. I appreciate that the minister is paying attention; I really do.

There's one strip of the Wizard of Id: He's standing at the edge of his castle, and it's coming up to an election. As opposed to in Ontario, in Id elections aren't real; the king always gets elected. That's not the way it works in Ontario; elections are real. But the king is making his pitch, and he's promising a chicken in every pot. The peasants aren't reacting the way the king thinks they're going to react. The peasants are getting very angry. The king turns to the wizard, who is one of his advisers, and says, "What is wrong? I'm promising a chicken in every pot." The wizard replies, "Well, the problem, sir, is you took away the pot." And that—

Mr. Brad Duguid: Is this about cannabis? Is this a cannabis thing?

Mr. John Vanthof: I never even thought about that. But that is what's happening here. People are tired of the government's decisions over the last 15 years. Now the government has come forward with a budget and a throne speech at the last moment, saying, "Here, we have figured out how to fix the problem," and people are tired, because they've been through this enough times. We'll say the hospitals are our chickens in the pot: "Oh, we're going to fix the hospitals. We know there are problems." You knew there were problems before.

I think people are especially frustrated now because when they gave this government another chance, it was because they thought—they were convinced—that Kathleen Wynne would be different. She was progressive. She was going to be open and transparent. She was going to be different, and it turned out to be more of the same—exactly the same. That is what made people so frustrated. They had hope, Speaker. They had hope.

"Oh, can you give us one example of how that could be?" They campaigned: open, transparent. They were going to show everything. What happened? One of the first decisions was to give up control of Hydro One, to sell Hydro One. I was in that campaign. At no point did my Liberal opponent talk about selling Hydro One. I didn't hear it in the campaign. Did I hear that the government was going to review assets? Yes. That seems reasonable. The government has lots of assets; it should review the assets, take an inventory of what's going on.

That seemed reasonable. It's a whole different story than saying, "We're going to sell Hydro One." But they did. They did.

Then they will tell you, "No, no, we didn't sell Hydro One. We're still the majority shareholder. We only sold 60%." Well, again, the government is vastly underestimating the sensibility of the regular person, the ordinary person like me, because when you sell 60% of the company—I don't care what kind of regulations you put in—you give up the controlling power of the company. When you give up the controlling power of a company, when it becomes private, it does what a private company should do: look out for the profitability of its shareholders. We don't have a problem with private companies trying to make a profit. Our problem is with private companies who are given the role of providing essential services, which is the opposite of what a private company is going to do. The two don't work.

If you're going to tell me, "Oh, no, the NDP is just opposed to private companies," that's not the case at all. We're going to use Hydro One as an example. This government is very proud, as we all are, of stopping the use of coal for power generation. All of the parties agree to that, including the Conservatives. They're backwards at times, but they agreed to not using coal, right?

So we've got the privatized Hydro One of which we control—to our energy critic: Is it 40%?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yes.

Mr. John Vanthof: Forty per cent?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Forty-five per cent.

Mr. John Vanthof: Forty-five per cent.

According to the Minister of Finance, that is being a majority shareholder and we have control of the company. If that is the case, why is Hydro One investing in coal-powered generation in the United States? Since we are opposed to the burning of coal for electricity generation and the government is supposed to be controlling Hydro One, why are we investing in coal-powered generation? Why? Because it probably makes money, and that's the role of a private company. But that shouldn't be the role of a company that was built to provide affordable, reliable power to the people of Ontario.

That's why, especially for me, coming from rural Ontario, we fight so hard to stop the sale of Hydro One, and why we have made it very plain that, if people decide—they have already decided that they're not going to vote for this old, tired government—if we are granted the privilege of governing this province, we will regain the control of Hydro One. Hydro One should not be investing in coal-powered generation plants. What they should be investing in—and what they won't as a private company—is in infrastructure to make sure that all Ontarians have access to clean, reliable power. As a private company, over the long term, that is not going to be the case for rural Ontario.

Once again, people will say, "No, no, that's not the case, Mr. Vanthof. That's not the case, NDP. That's not the case, because we have regulations and we have all this stuff. They have to provide service." My example? If

that's the case and if private companies are so good at providing service, then let's talk about Internet in rural Ontario. That's private. The Internet broadband in rural Ontario and small-town Ontario and many parts of the GTA certainly isn't what it is in the very built-up parts of the GTA. That's because it is provided by private companies that are doing their job. They focus on where their profit centres are. That's why people have the confidence to invest, why they buy stocks in private companies, why they base their pensions on private companies. We're not opposed to that, but private companies are not good at providing essential services, because it's contrary to what their real goal is. They're good at providing goods and services where it makes a profit, but certain places where it doesn't necessarily make a profit but you need it to provide an essential service—that should be provided by publicly controlled companies. That's why we have committed to regaining control of Hydro One.

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In the last few days, it's come to people's attention that the CEO of Hydro One's pay packet has increased considerably. Again, I will turn to my energy critic: Is it \$6 million and change, his pay packet? It's gone up eight times—

Mr. Peter Tabuns: From \$400,000.

Mr. John Vanthof: From \$400,000 to \$6 million and change—incredible.

Again, it's a private company. That's why we're regaining control, so we can regain control of where they're spending their money, including the CEO's salary.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: And senior execs'.

Mr. John Vanthof: That's right, and senior execs'. That's why we want to regain control.

I was shocked this morning when the Conservative finance critic, the member from Nipissing—who I respect; he has a very good grasp of the issues. I disagree profoundly with the way he sees some of the issues, but I have a lot of respect for his grasp of economic issues. He said that the first thing the Conservatives are going to do, if the people of Ontario choose them, is fire the CEO of Hydro One and perhaps the board. Well, it's a private company. I can't believe that the people who support the Conservatives, and many of the companies and the shareholders—they must be just shaking their heads in dismay, because Conservatives support full-out privatization. The next thing you know, they're going to be talking about—the CEO of Royal Bank makes \$12 million. Maybe they want to fire him as well.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: They're going to fire everyone.

Mr. John Vanthof: They can't fire the CEO of Royal Bank, and they can't fire the CEO of Hydro One. The only way we can regain control of what Hydro One is doing is regain control of the company.

You can't just willy-nilly say that you're going to fire people. That will not in the long term save any money, because if you willy-nilly try to fire people, they're going to sue you. And do you know what that is? That's the gas

plant scandal all over again. The replay of the gas plant scandal will be Doug Ford trying to can the CEO of Hydro One.

You have to be responsible. We believe that Hydro One should make decisions on behalf of the people of Ontario. The only way that Hydro One is going to be forced to do that is that the people of Ontario have to have control of Hydro One. That's why we have committed, from the day that they talked about selling it, and now that they have sold 60%, that the first thing that we will do when elected as the government of Ontario is start the process to regain the control of Hydro One so the decision-making power of the board will be returned to the people of Ontario, and so that they will have the majority shares and can make decisions that benefit the people of Ontario, not the majority private investors now. That is what companies like Ontario Hydro should be for.

This government has made the decision to sell Hydro One, something that Kathleen Wynne never talked about before she was elected. Again, I'll return to the soon-to-be Minister of the Environment, the critic for environment: Why? I think many of the people of Ontario are wondering that too. Why did she really sell Hydro One? It just goes against the whole brand. I'm sure one of the ministers is going to say, "Well, it's to pay for infrastructure." But again, you are vastly underestimating the thought power of the people of Ontario, because Hydro One brings in dividends to the province, higher than what it would have been to borrow the money—to build infrastructure—equivalent to what Hydro One was sold for. That's not just the NDP saying that. That's the Financial Accountability Officer of Ontario saying that as well.

The question is, why did they bother? Why? I think that's one of the questions, one of the biggest issues, that has shaken the resolve of the people of Ontario, shaken the faith of the people of Ontario regarding the government's true intentions, because they saw, in the last election, that what the government talked about wasn't what the government did—especially in the last election, when the McGuinty regime was very scandal-ridden. Some of these scandals are still percolating through. The new leader of the Liberal Party said, "No, it's going to be totally different under me. I'm a breath of fresh air"—open and transparent. The first thing she does is sell Hydro One. There was nothing open or transparent about that at all.

In this budget, the throne speech, the budget motion, the budget bill—I'll first talk about the budget motion just a little bit as it relates to the budget bill, Speaker—there are promises for everyone. Going back to the Wizard of Id, there's a chicken in every pot, and if you raise your hand twice, two chickens. Every promise is going to be solved.

What is very odd, I'd say, is that in the last budget, one of the things that was promised was there was going to be a balanced budget for the next three years; I believe it was promised. Now we're getting close to an election. Now they've realized that people aren't happy because there are a lot of things going wrong, and they've thrown

that whole—I'm missing the word—projection out the window.

When I had a business—as I'm sure everybody here knows, I was a farmer before I changed. If I had gone to my bank manager with a cash flow—which business people need to do every year, because we also have to borrow money and buy big-ticket items. If I had gone to them one year and said, "You know what? The next three years, I'm going to do everything; I'm not going to need to borrow any extra money," and then I'd come to them the next year and I said, "Well, no, I'm going to have to borrow a lot of extra money," that wouldn't shock him or her if I said, "I'm going to do an expansion." What would shock him or her is if I went to the bank manager and said, "Well, you know what? I didn't bother telling you last year that this was falling in and this was falling in, and I had to fix this and I had to fix this."

That's what this government is doing to the people of Ontario. They vastly underestimated what was actually going wrong. They vastly underestimated what it was really going to cost to fix our hospital system, or they actually ignored what it was going to cost. They have been ignoring—I think perhaps that's too strong a word, Speaker. Individually, as members, I do believe that all members are here to represent their constituents. They fight hard for their constituents. I believe all members do that. But the party, the Liberal government, has ignored many of the concerns of the people of Ontario. And now, at this late date, they've realized that people are angry. People who are working three jobs and getting further behind every day are angry. People who were told that things are getting better, but things aren't getting better for them and they're being left behind, are angry. And now, after 15 years, for the Premier to stand up and say, "We know things are getting tougher. That's why we are promising to fix it all if you'd just vote for us one more time," is making them even angrier.

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They're done. The question that the people of Ontario are asking themselves is, "Who's next?" That's a very legitimate question. Who's next? They're looking at the Conservatives and they're looking at the NDP because they feel—I'm trying to think of a parliamentary word, Speaker—very disappointed, very let down, by the current government. So their choice is the NDP or the Conservatives.

The Conservatives have had some trouble in the last little while. They had some trouble.

Interjections.

Mr. John Vanthof: They had some trouble, but the thing with the Conservatives—and thank you, Minister. I'll go in that tone again.

The thing with the Conservatives is, everybody knows that the Conservatives are going to take the pot. They're even going to take the firewood for the fire, but they say that they're not going to. They had a whole platform that showed how they weren't going to do it. Well, it had a few holes, the platform.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Like this.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes, but at least they had a platform. And then they ran into their troubles, and I'm not going to comment on that. Now they have a new leader whose first promise—and we covered this already. He's going to fire the CEO of Hydro One, a company that he doesn't even control.

Mr. Robert Bailey: He'll figure out a way.

Mr. John Vanthof: But that is not going to solve the people's issues with hydro. The government didn't solve people's issues with hydro either. They dropped the hydro bills by borrowing billions, and it's going to cost the people of Ontario even more money. As far as we know, according to their last platform, the Conservatives were going to keep the Liberal fair hydro plan. They were going to keep the Liberal fair hydro plan, plus it's going to cost millions and millions and millions to fire the CEO of Hydro One. That's not going to help the people of Ontario one little bit. Nothing. It's a great slogan, but that's all they're about. We're the only ones here who want to regain control of Hydro One so we can actually force Hydro One to make decisions on behalf of the people of Ontario.

We'll look at another issue. On one of his last tours through northern Ontario—the Ring of Fire is very near and dear to our hearts in northern Ontario. The Ring of Fire is going to bring a lot of economic opportunity to this province.

Hon. David Zimmer: I've been working very hard on that file.

Mr. John Vanthof: The minister says he has been working very hard on that file, and I have no reason not to believe the minister. He hasn't gone a long way, but he has been working hard.

The leader of the Conservatives has publicly stated that if it takes too long, he's going to jump on a bulldozer and build the road himself. Again, another great bumper sticker, Speaker, but you know what the people in northern Ontario heard and you know what the First Nations in northern Ontario heard? The person who is—

Interjection: The Premier.

Mr. John Vanthof: No, that the person who is running for the job of Premier doesn't understand the vast majority of this province, and he doesn't understand how this province works. He doesn't even really understand how the mining industry works, because the mining industry in this province works very hard to be environmentally friendly. They work very hard to play by the rules, because the rules protect them. The rules protect them. The last thing the mining industry wants is somebody saying things like that, that they don't care about the rules; they're just going to hop on a bulldozer and build the road themselves.

You know what? That's actually the reason I'm standing here today, because there was a time in Ontario when the Conservative Premier was going to forget about the rules and fill a mine with garbage in northern Ontario, no matter what. It took us 10 or 15 years to fight that, and that's exactly how I ended up here, because they didn't care about the rules, and we're hearing exactly the same thing now.

Do people in Ontario want red tape? No. There's a difference between red tape and rules that actually protect people. And if we're going to do the Ring of Fire right, we have to do it with our partners, with the First Nations, with the people who live there. We have to make sure it's done right and that those jobs that are going to be created provide long-term sustainability to the people who live there and to the people who live in the rest of the province, because we haven't done a very good job of that in the past. The First Nations know that, and so do people in northern Ontario know that. It's not a case of hopping on a bulldozer and building a road up north so you can bring the money down here or so you can send the ore to some plant in the States. If we're going to do this, we should do it right.

The last two things I have heard the Conservative leader speak about, and I'm quite shocked that the interim leader or the House leader—what would Mr. Fedeli be? He's still the official Leader of the Opposition. I'm quite shocked that he would actually echo some of those sentiments, because he knows. He's a very credible person, and he knows.

Hon. David Zimmer: Oh, you're going too far.

Mr. John Vanthof: No, no. I don't agree with his philosophy, but I'm not going to say that Mr. Fedeli doesn't understand the issues. I totally disagree with his philosophy, but he understands the issues. I can't believe that Mr. Fedeli—actually, I think Mr. Ford said they would have two bulldozers, that Vic would be on one and he would be on the other. I can't believe he thinks it's as simple as a bumper sticker, because it's not. It's not.

Our proposal—we're going to go again—for Hydro One: The first thing we're going to do is buy back control so we can force Hydro One to make decisions on behalf of the people, so that, long-term, it would help the people. The first thing they are going to do is fire the CEO of a company they don't even control, and that is not going to help anyone.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Order.

Mr. John Vanthof: The Conservatives are telling me that at least they're not going to build a wall. Well, they might as well. They're not going to build a wall. They are going to put up a big neon sign—

Hon. David Zimmer: “Open for Business.”

Mr. John Vanthof: A big neon sign: “Open for Business.”

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. It's never too late to warn anybody or name somebody. You know who you are. Okay? I'm going to return to the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane, and next time I get up, if it has nothing to do with this debate, someone's going to be warned.

I return to the member.

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you very much. I wasn't even going to mention the big neon sign until they started talking about the wall. We'll put a big neon sign at the border: “We're open for business. Take all our resources.

Take all our jobs. We're open for business.” They don't want rules; they just want bumper stickers.

In my last few minutes—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Order. I'm now going to warn the Minister of Housing. I'm going to warn the member from Davenport.

I'm going to return to the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane to finish.

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you, Speaker. In my last few minutes, I'm actually going to talk about the budget bill, because I've never actually understood it and I'm starting to understand it now. You have the budget motion, and in this case it's like a campaign document. We're so close to the election. So the budget motion has got all these promises, and then the budget bill, you would think, is the legislation that's going to actually make the promises come true. That's what you would think, and that's not actually what's happening here.

1710

Now there are some things in the budget bill that make a lot of sense. And again, I'm going to use that saying—and I would like to credit that saying to Kevin Modeste, who said, “Even a broken clock is right twice a day.” That is very true. There are things in the budget bill that make sense. But there are other things in the budget bill that raise some questions. We've had quite a few comments specifically on schedule 14 in the budget bill, and it seems that the government—and again, I'm not a labour lawyer, so I don't want to get into the issues because I think we haven't had time yet, because they are rushing this process, to really delve into what the background is. But nowhere in the budget motion, which is—what is that?—A Plan for Care and Opportunity, does it talk about meddling in labour issues. Basically, it would have certainly appeared to be meddling, something that should be dealt with by the labour relations board. In no place in the budget motion does it talk about changing issues in the labour relations board. I think that needs to be put on the record. Why is the government doing that? Why? It's in the same line of questioning as, why did Kathleen Wynne sell Hydro One? Why? Or why did the Premier of Ontario sell Hydro One? I apologize, Speaker; I don't like using—I messed up.

Hon. David Zimmer: We broadened the ownership.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'm sure the minister must have learned that in law school: “broadened the ownership.” You sold controlling interest in the company.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. You know I just warned two other members. So the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation is now warned.

I return to the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you, Speaker. The terminology used in this place is truly amazing sometimes. On the farm, if I sold a cow and I would say, “Well, I didn't actually sell the cow; I just broadened the ownership,” I don't think I would get the same reaction.

The government sold controlling interest in a company that was not only the pride of Ontario, but provided a

crucial role in the future of Ontario; and they sold controlling interest for no apparent reason, for no apparent long-term reason. They're going to pay for that very dearly. There are decisions the government has to make, and sometimes they're not popular, but if there's a reason behind it, people can understand. There is no reason behind that, and if there is, that's why people are so disappointed.

Schedule 14 is the same type of issue. Why is the government going down the road of interfering with labour relations? Why? That's a legitimate question that needs to be asked.

In my last minute, I hope—I've enjoyed this debate. I hope others have as well. The people of Ontario in a few short weeks face a decision. I think, in our opinion, they have made one decision already: that there is a change in the wind. The next decision has to be made: Who is the change going to be for?

I think we have made it very clear where our priorities lie. Our priorities have always been for the people of Ontario. When we're faced with a challenge, the challenge of giving up our electricity system, we've put forward a plan to regain that control. When we're given a challenge of people continually coming into our office with a lack of dental coverage, we've put forward a plan to solve that challenge. That is one option, or we have another option.

When given a challenge, for a line, they decide they're going to try to fire someone at a company that they don't even control, and they want to put up a big neon sign. They don't even have a platform, Speaker. I think people in Ontario are going to see that, and I think they're going to vote for change, a change for the better, and that will be Andrea Horwath.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Yvan Baker: As I walked in, the first thing I heard the member opposite talking about was putting a chicken in every pot, or something like that, and then at the end, he was talking about neon signs. I appreciate the figures of speech that the member opposite likes to use to make his point.

I have to say that I'm not sure I understand the chicken-in-the-pot reference, but I do understand that perhaps what the member meant to say is that there is a lot in this budget that will help every single person across Ontario. There are investments here in infrastructure, schools, hospitals, roads and transit. There are investments in health care, whether that be seniors' pharmacare; whether that be investments in the dental and drug programs for people of all ages, to help cover the costs of dental care and prescription drug coverage; whether it be the OHIP+, the pharmacare for young people under 25; whether it be the investments that we're making in education, in schools, in teachers; whether it be the investments that we're making in social services to help those who are less fortunate.

This is a budget, Madam Speaker, that I think has tremendous breadth and focuses on really caring for

every single person across Ontario. I've just given you a few examples, but there are many others that I could go through, and that I did go through when I helped Minister Sousa lead off debate on this bill. I think there's a lot here for everybody. It may not be a chicken in a pot, but I think it's a lot better than that. I think it's something that we can all be proud of and all rally around.

When I got elected, I committed that I would work on behalf of my constituents in Etobicoke Centre for today, but also for the years to come. As much as this budget helps people today, as I've mentioned, it also lays the foundation for economic success in the years to come. I think that's something we can all be proud of and all support.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I just really quickly wanted to comment on the member for Etobicoke's comments. But the reference, if my memory serves me correctly, is that the chicken in a pot refers to Governor Huey Long from Indiana, back in the 1930s: "A chicken in every pot, and every man a king," which was referring to his process of social credit and socialism—

Mr. Robert Bailey: Funny money.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: —funny money—which failed pretty horrifically in Indiana. So, just a point of education for the member opposite.

But to be quite honest, I think that the member, as much as his speech was given passionately, and as much as I appreciate his contributions to the debate—he spent a lot of time talking not about the government's own bill, I think, but also about the PC plan. I think it's fair to say that the PCs are becoming a threat across the province to the New Democratic Party, perhaps in ridings that may not even have been traditionally PC, so that's exciting.

But I think it's important to say that I've heard some heckling about the firing of the CEO of Hydro One. The reality is that the governance contract between the province and Hydro One is very clear that the province, in fact, has that authority to fire not only the CEO but every member of the board, and everyone else as well.

What I think is important is to recognize that, as much as they might like to act as if that's not possible, it is indeed very possible, given the governance structure, just for the member's own understanding.

1720

I agree with him on some issues. I think it's fair to say that the Liberals have had 15 years to fix a lot of the things they have expressed concern with. At the end of the day, they're coming out with a desperate, last-ditch attempt to distract voters, I think, from their record, from 15 years of waste and mismanagement. I think we can all agree that that's not a good thing.

I look forward to a change on June 7—perhaps not orange change, but change.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: As always, I'm very impressed with the speeches made by our finance critic, Mr.

Vanthof. There are a lot of things that he covered. I can't touch on them all, but I do want to speak to one piece, and that's the purchase by Hydro One—privatized, directed by the Liberals—of a coal-fired utility in the United States.

First off, I've asked the Minister of Energy in estimates whether he would get rid of the coal plant. I didn't get a useful comment. I also asked if in fact he would tell Hydro One not to buy any other coal plants in the United States. He wouldn't answer that question. The closest he came was saying, "You know, those utilities are vertically integrated," which means they have everything from digging up the coal to running the coal plant to running the wires to doing the billing. So I think the position of the government is, "Yes, we'll buy coal plants. If we think they're profitable, we'll do that"—totally contrary to all the rhetoric we get from this government about its relationship to coal and to the environment.

The other thing I want to say about the purchase of Avista, the Washington state and Oregon state entity, is that it does have ownership of the Colstrip coal plant. There are big questions there about unfunded liability and undetermined liability, because that plant has tonnes of coal waste that have been seeping into groundwater. No one has ever quantified that liability, so we don't know how much of a bill we're going to be stuck with when, ultimately, someone has to deal with the water contamination issues in that part of the world.

The government's privatization plan was reckless and damaging in the first place, but to go and buy companies where there is an unquantified liability and to perpetuate climate change by supporting coal-fired generation is extraordinary to me.

Yes, this bill has a lot of options for discussion.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

I'm going to recognize the member from Scarborough Centre.

Mr. Brad Duguid: Thank you, Speaker. Maybe I got up prematurely there, but I think I got up when I was supposed to.

I'm going to be leaving here fairly soon, and I'm really going to miss the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane. I think he's going to miss me too, because we have a lot of fun together in this place. I'm going to miss you all, but him in particular.

At the same time, when he brought up the Wizard of Id, I was reminded of a cartoon that I recall from the Wizard of Id, where the king is wandering through a field and sees this kid studying and sitting near a tree. He asked the kid, "Young man, what are you studying?" The young man says, "Political science." So the king says, "Exactly what is political science?" The young man says, "It's like science fiction, only less relevant."

So when I listen to the comments of some of the opposition, in particular, on Hydro One, that's all I'm hearing right now: science fiction. The thought of firing the whole board? That is a Trump-like crazy move that

would result in absolute chaos to an organization that actually is providing better customer service than it has not only in the last few years but in the last four decades. That organization needed to be turned around. I would have thought the Tories would have recognized that a little bit of private sector acumen in that company was well needed.

But in terms of the member opposite in the NDP, the idea of buying it back—spending billions of taxpayer dollars to buy it back—only to return it to its previous state, which was not all that efficient, that's science fiction as well. They would never do it because we couldn't afford to do it, even though they say they're going to do it. So I can't help but think that Wizard of Id strip applies very, very well in this debate.

One thing I will say, in the last 10 seconds, to the member opposite—and I hope he refers to it—is the fact that there's \$500 million being dedicated to broadband expansion in rural Ontario. He's spoken a lot about that in the past, and I hope he maybe acknowledges that that's in the budget—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you.

I return to the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane to wrap up.

Mr. John Vanthof: I would like to thank the member from Etobicoke, who always speaks eloquently, and who I've worked on many committees with. He spoke about the budget. Again, the problem with the budget is that the budget is a campaign promise—15 years of a very tired government.

The member from Niagara West-Glanbrook talked about how I referenced the Conservative plan. I think what I referenced was the Conservatives' former plan and their current lack of plan—except for trying to fire the CEO and the board of Hydro One. The issue with that is that it will not lower hydro prices in Ontario. If that's their plan, that's a waste of time.

My colleague from Toronto-Danforth, whom I've learned a lot from over the years—and I totally agree with the issue, which I brought up in my speech as well, regarding buying coal-fired power plants. It's not a direction that this government should be proud of; that a company they are supposed to be the controlling shareholder of at 43% is going down that direction. Obviously, they're not the controlling shareholder or they really don't—

Interjections: We are.

Mr. John Vanthof: But, if you're the controlling shareholder, why are you buying coal-fired power plants if you don't believe in coal-fired power? That's the question.

The member from Scarborough Centre, whom I do enjoy debating with very much—

Mr. Brad Duguid: We're going to hang out.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes, we are.

Again, the money that was promised for broadband: We appreciate the promise. We really do. It's too bad that it was made by a tired, old government that is on its way out.

Regaining control of Hydro One is not science fiction. Regaining control of Hydro One is—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Further debate?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I will be sharing my time with the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, the Minister of Housing and minister responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy, as well as the Minister of Research, Innovation and Science.

It gives me a great opportunity to rise in the House this afternoon to weigh in on this debate on our Plan for Care and Opportunity Act, Bill 31. The 2018 budget makes significant new investments in health care, child care, home care and mental health, and delivers new measures to create more job opportunities for people across the province.

The budget also focuses on initiatives that make life more affordable and provide greater financial security during a time of rapid economic change. Ontario's economy is getting stronger. With the unemployment rate at its lowest in almost two decades—I believe that in March it was at 5.5%—we continue to create jobs here in the province of Ontario, with over 10,000 net new jobs in the month of March.

Yet, between the rising cost of living and stable, long-term jobs becoming harder to find, many people are struggling to take care of themselves and their families. As the changing economy widens the gaps within our society, the government has a plan to build a fairer, better Ontario by supporting everyone in the province with the care and opportunity they need to get ahead.

This budget lays out our plan for care and opportunity. Even with the relatively strong economy and with unemployment at its lowest point, as I mentioned, many are still struggling to get ahead. We cannot ignore the fact that many families are struggling to get ahead in this rapidly changing economy. The costs for caring for themselves and their loved ones continue to grow, and that's causing people stress and anxiety.

What I'm hearing from people and what we are hearing from people is that they expect their government to step up and help with that burden. Now is not the time to pull back or to make deep cuts to the services people in our province rely on. We need more care. We are making a deliberate choice to invest in programs that make it easier for the people of this province to care for their loved ones. Our plan also takes steps to boost economic growth and job creation, and focuses on initiatives that make life more affordable.

One of the things I hear from young families moving into my riding of Davenport—and every year, more and more young families move into Davenport—is that they have difficulty in finding quality, affordable child care. So I'm proud to be part of a government that is listening to the people of Ontario and is doing just that: providing more options for families by making preschool child care free for children aged two and a half years old until they're eligible for kindergarten. This, Madam Speaker, is saving a family with one child, on average, \$17,000

per year, and this builds on the savings families get from full-day kindergarten. It seems just like the other day that my sons were in preschool and I was looking for child care, so I know and I can appreciate the investments that this government is making.

1730

We know the contributions that women make to our economy. I refer to women because it is often the mothers who stay home to take care of their child. We have fathers, as well, who stay home, but many times it is the mother. Their contributions that they make to the economy are so crucial, so we want the mothers to get back to work, to be able to continue on with their careers, to expand their careers and also to continue contributing to the economy and shortening the gender wage gap that currently exists.

I recently had the opportunity to meet the ambassador here in Canada from Norway, and we had an opportunity to speak about OHIP+ and what our government is doing providing free prescription medications for all children and youth under the age of 25. We hadn't yet expanded it to seniors at the time. We got talking about health care and what they are doing in Norway, and I asked her specifically about child care and the costs that they had regarding child care. They have a formula that they use and they have a program in place, and that works for Norway, but one of the things that really struck me in my discussion with the ambassador from Norway is that she said to me, "Cristina, nothing impacted the economy greater than the return of women back to work after long absences and after being away during a maternity leave." And this was coming from a country that relies a lot on, and whose economy is really boosted by, natural resources, so women's impact on economy was greater than that.

I mentioned OHIP+ and the fact that we had introduced that earlier this year in January. We are now expanding OHIP+ to seniors. Let me tell you, Madam Speaker, when I speak to the seniors in my community of Davenport, they are excited for the investments that we are making in OHIP+.

So I support this bill. I have so much more to say, but I do want to make sure that my fellow colleagues get an opportunity to weigh in on this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Hon. David Zimmer: Willowdale has one of the largest seniors' populations in the province and, indeed, in the country. I wanted to say a few comments about the budget and how it relates to seniors. Seniors built this country, built this province and built this city. In their retirement years, it is important that they enjoy security in those years, in many ways as recognition of all of their past contributions.

This past fall, we passed legislation to increase the Pension Benefits Guarantee Fund. What this fund will do is it will guarantee payments of certain benefits from the pension plan should an employer go insolvent or into bankruptcy. That's a troublesome thing that seniors have to think about in their retirement years, when they've

planned on this pension and our economy develops in such a way that perhaps that pension is at risk. Can you imagine the anxiety that that creates in their minds?

This initiative, this guarantee fund, is the only one of its kind in Canada. That is progressive legislation. That is leading-edge legislation for the benefit of our seniors and retirees. The fund will provide critical assistance to pensioners and plan members when their plans are wound up with insufficient funds to cover the proposed benefits. Think of the anxiety that that has gotten rid of in seniors' minds when they are entering their retirement years. This is an example of good government for the benefit of the people, in this case particularly for the benefit of seniors and retirees.

The increase will raise the guarantee payment from \$1,000 a month to \$1,500 a month. That is a significant amount, an extra \$500 a month for retirement income. And we are introducing legislation that is going to make that retroactive to May 2017. There's a whole other cohort of seniors that this will bring some peace of mind to, some measure of confidence that they can enjoy their retirement years.

I want to particularly comment on the effect this would have on the former Sears Canada employees, who will benefit from receiving this additional support. The Sears situation is one that is playing out in the media, and it has created tremendous levels of anxiety. We have an obligation as a government, if one of the responsibilities of government is to help people, to do things with them that they can't necessarily do all on their own. This is a contribution to that need.

The bill is also going to provide additional supports for workers and retirees by proposing to amend some of the aspects of the Pension Benefits Act. What it's going to do is it's going to require disclosure of events that may negatively impact corporate pensions, and that disclosure has to be made early to the Superintendent of Financial Services. That gives the superintendent a chance to take some preventive action.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn: It gives me great pleasure and pride, actually, to stand up this afternoon and speak to our budget bill, Bill 31, the Plan for Care and Opportunity Act. Truly this budget reflects our values as a society and as a province of wanting to ensure that all Ontarians are cared for and receive the supports and benefits that they've worked hard for and that they are entitled to in a caring society such as ours.

Madam Speaker, I look to what this budget means to an average family in my community of Etobicoke-Lakeshore. I can imagine a young family living in the Kipling and Dundas area of my community. Perhaps they're renting a home there. They'd be renting a home quite possibly in a condo that was built not that long ago. They're tenants. They now have rent protection as tenants of that condo.

In this budget, there are investments in public transit. That person living near Kipling and Dundas will now

have the option of taking the TTC, which we support through gas tax funding. The gas tax funding will increase as a result of the funds coming through the cap-and-trade program. Or that person might have the option of taking GO Transit downtown to work. Now, with this budget, that GO Transit ride will be reduced practically in half to match what TTC fares are in the city of Toronto.

That same young family that now enjoys the protection of rent control and that now has better access to public transit, which is more affordable, has a young child. That child could now receive free child care and eventually move on to full-day kindergarten, which we announced several years ago and which hundreds of thousands of Ontario children and families have already benefited from.

Perhaps somebody in the family is just starting out in the workplace. They're now enjoying a higher salary because the minimum wage has gone up and will go up again. They're enjoying better protections in the workplace.

Their elderly parents are now not going to have to pay anything for the drugs that they might need. They will no longer have to pay a copayment. Their young children are already covered with OHIP+ and free pharmacare.

If they don't have the benefit of any kind of health or dental coverage through their workplace, this government is there for them and will provide them with some dental and health care coverage if they're not otherwise covered.

1740

I look at this for an average family in my community of Etobicoke-Lakeshore—and there are millions of similar families in ridings across the country. They will tangibly benefit from this budget, which invests in them, invests in their care and invests in giving them more opportunities in this province.

This average family might have a young person in it who is trying to figure out what their life path would be, what their career could be. That young person now might qualify for free tuition or significantly reduced tuition to a post-secondary institution. If they don't think that kind of additional training or education is right for them, maybe they want to go into the trades. This budget invests in more apprenticeship training to lead young people into all kinds of careers where we know there's actually a shortage of labour in those areas. This budget invests in them.

Over and over again, page by page, clause by clause, line by line, this budget invests in Ontarians, provides them care, provides them more opportunity, guarantees more fairness and reflects the kind of values Ontarians cherish.

Ontarians don't want cuts. Ontarians don't want to see their public health eroded. They don't want to see their schools falling apart. They don't want bumper stickers and slogans, and that's all the Ontario PCs offer them. We offer them care.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Hon. Reza Moridi: It's a great pleasure to rise in this House and speak about our current budget, 2018.

This budget reflects the values of the Liberal Party and it reflects the values of this Premier and this caucus. This budget is for the people of Ontario. When you look at the details in this budget you will see that there is something for every Ontarian in this budget.

When it comes, for example, to investing in the people of Ontario, this budget invests in the people of Ontario from age two and a half up to university level. We introduced free daycare for young families. Young families, Madam Speaker, as you know, have to send their child to daycare, and this costs, for each child, about \$15,000 to \$17,000 per year. In many cases, either the families invest this money or spend this money on their children in daycare, or the mother stays at home for two or three years. Of course, after two or three years, when she wants to go back to work, it becomes very difficult to find a job after being away from her profession.

Indeed, some years ago, we introduced full-day kindergarten—JK, SK. Now, based on this budget, education will be provided by the government for every kid, every child from the age of two and a half up to the end of high school. In university, of course, we have introduced free tuition for the middle class and people coming from low-income and middle-income families.

Our philosophy on this side of the House is investing in the people of Ontario because we believe our greatest asset is our people. It's the people who build this province. We need to educate those people. We need to invest in those people so they can produce for this country and for this province. That's what we have been doing.

As a result of our right policies in the past 15 years in this province, our kids never, ever lost a single hour in school, while we all know that under the Conservatives, when they were in office eight years, close to 13 million hours of schooling were lost. As a result, the graduation rate was 64% in our high schools, meaning that only 64% of our students graduated from high school; now 86% of them are graduating from high school. This is one element of this budget: investing in the people of Ontario.

We're also investing in businesses. We are reducing the small business tax, not by 1%, not by 2%—by 22%. This is going to assist small businesses. We know small businesses are the backbone of the economy of this country, of this province.

We are also increasing the tax credit for research and innovation. We are increasing the tax credit for R&D in this province so that our companies can become more productive, can become more innovative and, as a result, we can attract more investment from foreign sources to this province so that our economy can grow. Our economy is already doing very well. Our economy is growing by 2.7%. We are leading not only every Canadian province, but we are also leading all of the G7 countries. Our unemployment rate now is around 5.6%, the lowest in the past 25 years.

When it comes to investing in the people of Ontario, again, in terms of seniors, we are making prescribed

medication free for every senior, every person aged 65 and above in this province. Can you imagine its impact on our population? They will be covered by not only 100 or 200 medications; they will be covered by 4,400 different types of medication which are all on the OHIP formulary.

We are also investing in mental health—historic investments in mental health in the history of this province, by \$2.5 billion. This will increase the total investment in mental health to \$17 billion.

Our investment in every sector of our society is phenomenal. This budget, once it's implemented, is going to take the province of Ontario to another plateau for years to come.

Madam Speaker, this budget is for the people of Ontario. It reflects the values of this Premier, it reflects the values of this government and the Liberal Party of Ontario, and I'm so proud to support this budget.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to rise and respond to the comments from the member for Davenport and the three ministers.

In the course of their comments, I'm pleased that they raised aspects related to health care in particular, because one of the glaring omissions is any measure to address the mental health crisis on campuses.

This particular issue in itself has been evident to this government for the better part of 15 years. Unfortunately, the 2018 budget, taken together with the Premier's recent announcement related to mental health, only included a paltry sum for community college and university students, many of whom are in desperate need of help now, not over four years. Speaker, when you break down the announcement, the amount of funds provided over each year and divided across each of the 44 community colleges and universities in Ontario, the funding won't have an impact that students, faculty and administrators have been asking for for several years.

There's another glaring omission in the budget. The member from Davenport and the ministers raised seniors. Well, a striking omission is a lack of measures to combat and prevent acts of elder abuse. Clearly, we have a growing demographic of seniors in this province. We all acknowledge, within this Legislature, within all parties, that elder abuse is a terrible crime perpetrated against our society's most vulnerable citizens, yet as you read through the narrative of Bill 31, again a "Plan for Care," well, there certainly isn't the level of care that you would have expected for a growing demographic of seniors.

It's not only within the aspect of elder abuse—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, it's an honour to be able to stand in my place and comment on, I believe, the member from Davenport and several other—ministers? Members?

I heard the comment that the budget reflects the "commitment," I believe the word was, to this govern-

ment's plan for care. This government has been in power for 15 years, and there have been issues that have been festering for many of these years. Hospital overcrowding and hospital underfunding has been an issue that didn't pop up because of the last flu season. The wait-list for long-term care, again, is not something that just popped up. That is something that has been there for a long time, for many years.

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It's nice that the government has now decided to show their commitment with their latest budget, a few weeks before the election. It's nice that now they have decided to care. As individual members, I'm sure they do care, but the direction of their government hasn't demonstrated that over the last 15 years, and certainly not over the last four. People had a lot of faith in the current Premier, and quite frankly, on many issues, she didn't deliver what people believed. This government, which claimed to be open and progressive—she didn't deliver, and—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Yvan Baker: It's interesting. I was listening to the member from the PC caucus, and he was talking about how there isn't enough being done about mental health, so I wanted to just speak to that.

First of all, prior to this budget, we made a significant investment in mental health services on post-secondary campuses. I have to tell you that I've had the chance to visit a number of post-secondary campuses and speak to some of the young student leaders at those campuses, and they've certainly told me that that has made a major difference. Is there more to be done? Sure, absolutely, but boy, it has made a big difference in their minds, so I think that that's something I want to correct the member on.

But I also want to note that in this budget a number of investments are being made to further strengthen mental health for young people. We're providing every high school in Ontario with access to mental health support within the next two years, to enable early intervention. This is not just about helping high school students; the comment from the member opposite was about post-secondary, but by helping high school students, by intervening early, we can address those mental health challenges early, so that they don't arise in post-secondary. What we're really doing is helping post-secondary students, as well, through this measure.

We're going to be helping up to 350,000 more people across the province with anxiety and depression by increasing access to publicly funded psychotherapy, including children and youth; adding 2,475 more housing units over four years to those who require care; and creating at least 15 additional youth wellness hubs to improve access to services. This is for young people age

12 to 25—again, covering students, so helping to address mental health challenges in those early years, before young people get into post-secondary. But this also allows us to serve those young people who are at that age and who are in post-secondary, and those who aren't as well.

So I think a lot is being done on mental health. A lot is being done in other areas, as other members have spoken to. I think this is something to be proud of.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments? I will return to the Minister of Housing and poverty reduction to wrap up.

Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn: I want to thank the members from Whitby—Oshawa, Timiskaming—Cochrane and Etobicoke Centre for their remarks. Madam Speaker, this budget reflects the values of Ontarians. Ontarians value a strong health system. Ontarians value a strong education system. Ontarians value good infrastructure. Ontarians value strong public transit. Ontarians value taking measures to protect our environment and to address the issues of climate change. And Ontarians value the fact that there will be care available for our youngest to our oldest, whether it's child care or home care, pharmacare for the young or pharmacare for seniors. These are the things that Ontarians value.

I and, I believe, all of my colleagues on this side of the House will agree that whether it's health care or education, the job is never done. It is continuous. It is a continuous effort to improve, enhance and create more investment in the services that we need.

But, Madam Speaker, we know that on the other side of the House, from the Ontario party of cuts, the Ontario PC Party, there is no offer of enhancement or of more. There are only slogans of efficiencies. We heard those slogans 20 years ago. Those slogans turned into 28 hospitals being closed and billions of dollars taken out of our health care. Now, to add insult to injury, the leader of the Conservatives says he wants to do away with rent control, as well.

Madam Speaker, Ontarians want care and opportunity. That is what we are offering.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the Minister of Research, Innovation and Science.

Hon. Reza Moridi: Point of order, Madam Speaker: I want to correct my record. I said earlier that the unemployment rate in the province of Ontario is 5.6%. In fact, it's less than that. It is 5.5%. As well as that, Ontario's economy has been growing faster than Canada's.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Every member has a right to correct their record.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Seeing that it's almost 6 p.m., I will be adjourning the House until 10:30 a.m. on Monday, April 16, 2018.

The House adjourned at 1756.

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Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
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Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Des Rosiers, Hon. / L'hon. Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
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Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
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Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail

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Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
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Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
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Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development / Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle
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MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
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Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Municipal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires municipales
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Hon. / L'hon. Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
McMahon, Hon. / L'hon. Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	Minister Responsible for Digital Government / Ministre responsable de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
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Milczyn, Hon. / L'hon. Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Housing / Ministre du Logement Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté
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Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Attorney General / Procureur général Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
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Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Hon. / L'hon. Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Hon. / L'hon. Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
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